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THE AGE OF THE BRĀHMAṆAS

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INDIA OF THE AGE OF THE BRĀHMAṆAS

ANCIENT INDIAN CULTURE AND CIVILISATION AS REVEALED IN THE BRĀHMAṆAS

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FOREWORD

I had the pleasure to go through Dr. Jogiraj Basu's work 'Ancient Indian culture and civilisation as revealed in the Brāhmaṇas' in manuscript. I have been highly impressed by the work which bespeaks the author's deep erudition, extensive study of abstruse Brāhmaṇa texts in original, and power of presentation. His work is a comprehensive one having taken into account the social, economic, political, military, religious, philosophical and miscellaneous aspects of the Vedic culture and civilisation of the period concerned. The only published work in this field is Dr. Wilhelm Rau's book in German on the social aspect of the Brāhmaṇas ; Rau's book has not been translated into English. Dr. Basu's book is more comprehensive, penetrating and scholarly. The work is divided into four books, viz, social and economic, political and military, religion and philosophy, and the fourth book deals with miscellaneous materials. At the end of each book the author has given a critical evaluation of the aspect concerned showing how far it has progressed from the Saṃhitā period and how far it anticipates the civilisation of the Upaniṣadic age. I am confident Dr. Basu's work is an outstanding original contribution to the field of Vedic research, and fills up a lacuna in the history of ancient Indian culture and civilisation. This valuable work will be of great help to researchers and Indologists. I convey my sincere congratulations to the author and wish the book a wide publicity.

Sorbonne
Paris (France)
10. 8. 1966

Louis Renou

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PREFACE

This work is the book form of my thesis 'Ancient Indian culture and civilisasion as revealed in the Brāhmaṇas' (four Brs. in particular and all Brs. in general) submitted to the University of Jadavpur for the degree of Ph.D. in 1966. It is an attempt to present a comprehensive picture of the vedic culture and civilisation in all its aspects as recorded in the Br. texts of the four vedas. The work is divided into four books besides introduction and conclusion, viz, social and economic aspect, political and military aspect, religion and philosophy, and miscellaneous. Such topics as flora and fauna, language and types of literature, calendar etc. which do not come under the purview of the first three books have been put in the miscellaneous section. At the end of each book a summary of the section is given which is a critical evaluation of the aspect concerned showing how far the civilisation of the Br. period has progressed from that of the Saṃhitā period or early vedic age and how far it anticipates that of the Upaniṣadic period or the last phase of the vedic age. There is only one book in this line, viz, Dr. Wilhelm Rau's book in German on the social aspect of the Brāhmaṇas. The book has not been translated into English. I do not know German and has never seen this book. Dr. Louis Renou in his esteemed foreword on my work remarks that Dr. Rau's book deals with the social aspect only while my book deals with all the aspects of culture and civilisation of the period concerned.

I have given detailed contents. I am indebted to the original vedic texts for collection of materials. I convey my gratefulness to the examiners of my thesis, Dr. Satkari Mookerji, Dr. A. L. Basham, Dr. R. R. Mukherji, as also to Dr. Friedrich Heilar, Dr. Louis Renou. Dr. U. N. Ghosal etc. for their valuable opinions. I am thankful to the publisher Messres Sanskrit Pustak Bhandar for undertaking the publica-

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tion of this book. I am very grateful to Dr. Janakiballav Bhattacharya, Reader, Dept. of Sanskrit, C. U. whose constant encouragement went a great way in the accomplishment of my arduous task. I also take this opportunity to convey my sincere thanks to my students Dr. Umarani Chakravarty, Prof. Sudhabasini Basu and Supadma Nag who extended their sincere co-operation in verifying the typescripts with the original and in putting transliteration marks.

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Dr. Basu's Road
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ABBREVIATIONS

R. V.—Ṛgveda.
S. V.—Sāmaveda.
A. V.—Atharva-veda.
Y. V.—Yajurveda.
T. S.—Taittirīya Saṃhitā.
V. S.—Vajasaney Saṃhitā.
Br.—Brāhmaṇa.
Brs.—Brāhmaṇas.
A. B.—Aitareya Brāhmaṇa.
K. B.—Kauṣītaki Brāhmaṇa.
T. B.—Taittrīya Brāhmaṇa.
S. B.—Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa.
J. B. (P)—Jaiminīya Brāhmaṇa (Pūrvārdha).
J. B. (U)—Jaiminīya Brāhmaṇa (Uttarārdha).
P. B.—Pañcaviṃśa Brāhmaṇa.
G. B. (P)—Gopatha Brāhmaṇa (Pūrvārdha).
G. B. (U)—Gopatha Brāhmaṇa (Uttarārdha).
C. B.—Chāndogya Brāhmaṇa.
M. S.—Maitrāyaṇī Saṃhitā.
K. S.—Kāthaka Saṃhitā.
A. A.—Aitareya Āraṇyaka.
T. A.—Taittirīya Āraṇyaka.
S. A.—Śānkhyāyana Āraṇyaka.
A. S. S.—Āśvalāyana Śrauta Sūtra.
A. P. S.—Āpastamba Śrauta Sūtra.
S. S. S.—Śānkhyāyana Śrauta Sūtra.
L. S. S.—Lātyāyana Śrauta Sūtra.
K. U.—Kathopaniṣad.
C. U.—Chāndogyopaniṣad.
B. U.—Bṛhadāraṇyakopaniṣad.
M. U.—Muṇḍakopaniṣad.
Man. U.—Māṇḍūkyopaniṣad.
S. U.—Śvetāśvataropaniṣad.
P. M. S.—Pūrva-Mīmāṃsā-Sūtra.

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INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this thesis is to give an account of the ancient Indian civilisation as revealed in the Aitareya Brāhmaṇa and Kauṣītaki Brāhmaṇa of the Ṛgveda, the Taittirīya Brāhmaṇa of the Black Yajurveda and the Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa of the white Yajurveda in particular, and all the Brs. in general. Civilisation finds expression through social, economic political, religious and theological cum philosophical aspects. Accordingly the thesis has been divided into several books, each book dealing with a particular aspect and comprising several chapters. Moreover there are certain aspects which do not come under the purview of the aspects mentioned above ; such aspects have been discussed in the book captioned 'Miscellaneous'. Thus an attempt has been made to give a comprehensive picture of ancient Indian civilisation as revealed in the A.B., K.B., T.B. and the S.B. The plan of the work is given towards the close of the introduction.

The Brāhmaṇas form a part and parcel of the vast Vedic literature and are generally designated as later Vedic literature.

Definition and import of the term 'Veda'.

Hence for thorough understanding of the import of the Brāhmaṇas we are to discuss first the import of the term 'Veda'. The word 'Veda' means supreme knowledge or knowledge, par excellence. In the words of Yājñavalkya,—'it enlightens one on the knowledge of supra-sensible matters which lie beyond the domain of perception and inference, hence it is called the 'Veda'[1]. Manu calls the Veda 'the repository or fountain-head of all religions and duties'[2]. The term Veda comprises both the Mantra and the Brāhmaṇa. 'Veda' is the name given to Mantra and Brāhmaṇa jointly[3].

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1 'Pratyakṣeṇānumityā vā yastūpāyo na vidyate ;
Enam vidanti vedena tasmād vedasya vedatā'.

2 1-, 'Vedo 'khiladharmamūlam'.

3 Āpastamba-śrauta-sūtra, 24-1-31,
'Mantra-brāhmaṇayorvedanāmadheyam'.

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Sāyanācāryya in the introduction to his commentary on the Ṛgveda observes,—'The name Veda is given to the vast body of literature made up of Mantra and Brāhmaṇa jointly'[4]. The great authority on the Pūrva-mīmāṃsā system and the celebrated commentator of its aphorisms, Śabara-Svāmin also defines the Veda as 'Mantraśca Brāhmaṇaṃ ca Vedaḥ', 'Mantras and Brs. together constitute the Veda', in his commentary on P.M.S. 1-2-33. What the lay man generally understands by the word Veda is comprised by the word 'Mantra' which is also termed Saṃhitā ; but that is not the correct view as it leaves out the Brāhmaṇas. What is now called 'Veda', i.e., the huge mass of literature denoted by the said term comprises three different classes of literary works ; and to each of these three classes belong a number of separate works or treatises, some of which have been preserved as handed down to us and many of which have been lost and still remain untraced. These three different classes of literary works that go to the making of the vast Vedic literature are enumerated below.—

Three classes of literary works implied by the term 'Veda'.

I. 'Mantras' or Saṃhitās which are collections of hymns, prayers, benedictions, incantations, sacrificial formulae called Nivids and litanies.

II. 'Brāhmaṇas' standing for a huge mass of prose texts which contain speculations on the mantras, precepts for the application of mantras in different sacrifices, details of sacrificial paraphernalia and theological, philosophical, grammatical, etymological and metrical speculations.

III. 'Āraṇyakas' (Forest-texts) and Upaniṣads which are partly included in the Brāhmaṇas themselves but partly are also reckoned as independent works. They contain the meditations of forest-ascetics on God, creation or the universe and on mankind ; the philosophy of ancient India is embedded in these works. Whereas the Brāhmaṇas deal with the huge bulk of sacrificial paraphernalia which represents karma-kāṇḍa, the Āraṇyakas and Upaniṣads, on the other hand, deal with philosophical and theosophical speculations which represent Jñāna-

[4] Mantra-brāhmaṇātmaka-śabdarāśirvedaḥ'.

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kāṇḍa ; hence from the former has emerged the particular school of Indian philosophy known as Pūrva-mimāṃsā or karma-mimāṃsā or Dharma-mimāṃsā ; while, the latter is the source of the Vedānta philosophy called the Uttara-mimāṃsā or Brahma-mimāṃsā. The Upaniṣads form the very bedrock of the Vedānta philosophy, and the Bhagavat-gitā, the sacred and revered scripture of the Indians is a succinct gist of the Upaniṣads. Thus we find, the Upaniṣads are distinct in character from the Brāhmaṇas. Sacrifice is extolled and highly recommended in the Brāhmaṇas whereas it is decried in the Upaniṣads which extoll knowledge, par excellence, and maintain that supreme knowledge and not sacrifice is the means to attain the goal of liberation or final beatitude. Though they widely differ in character still we find some Upaniṣads forming integral parts of the Brāhmaṇas. For instance, the famous Bṛhadāraṇyaka-Upaniṣad is included in the Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa. At this point we make it abundantly clear that in this thesis the Brāhamṇas concerned have been taken in the strict sense of the term to the exclusion of the Āraṇyakas and Upaniṣads so as not to confuse the issue. Hence by the term 'Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa' we mean the pure unmixed Brāhmaṇa text alone minus the Bṛhadāraṇyaka-Upaniṣad. One can easily infer the difficulty that will arise if we include the Upaniṣad as a part of the Brāhmaṇa while discussing the peculiar characteristics of the Brāhmaṇa ; e.g., in our discussion relating to the religion and philosophy of the Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa if we take into account the tenets of the Upaniṣad concerned, it will not only muddle the issue but also make the position self-contradictory. The underrating of sacrifices and recommendations of the path of knowledge, Jñāna-mārga, adumbrated in the Upaniṣads do not fit in with but run counter to the preachings of the Brāhmaṇas.

Āraṇyakas & Upaniṣads, distinct from the Brāhmaṇas.

The term Brahmana is used in this thesis in the strict sense of the term.

The term Mantra or Saṃhitā mentioned above refers to the mantra or samhitā portions of the three vedas,—RK, Sāman and Yajuṣ. They also go by the name of Trayī or the triple learning. The Atharvaveda-saṃhitā is a later produc-

The Samhitas enumerated.

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tion and unlike the other three saṃhitās has no direct bearing on the main sacrifices. The Ṛgveda-saṃhitā is a collection of prayers and invocations in metrical form. Various duties are invoked therein. The Samaveda-saṃhitā is a collection of hymns which are eulogies of deities that can be sung. This melody or chant is an essential feature of the Sāmaveda. Almost all the hymns of the R.V. are found in the S.V. with the difference that they are without tune or melody in the R.V. The Yajurveda-saṃhitā is the collection of sacrificial formulas which are mostly in prose. This Saṃhitā comprises two divergent texts or schools, viz.—

Two schools or texts of the Yajurveda.

(i) The Kṛṣṇa-yajurveda or the saṃhitā of the Black Yajurveda, which has been preserved in several recensions, of which the most important are the Taittirīya-saṃhitā and the Maitrāyaṇī-saṃhitā.

(ii) The Śukla-yajurveda or the saṃhitā of the white yajurveda which has been preserved in the Vājasaneyi-saṃhitā.

The Atharva-veda samhita is a collection of both prose and metrical pieces bespeaking magic formulae, occult science, knowledge of medicine etc.

Each veda has its particular Brāhmaṇas, Āraṇyakas & Upaniṣads.

On account of these four different samhitas the term Veda is often used in the plural (vedah) to signify the whole range of the sacred lore viz.—the Ṛgveda, the Sāmaveda, Yajurveda and Atharva-veda. Every work that belongs to the class of the Brāhmaṇas or Āraṇyakas or of the Upaniṣads, is attached to one of the enumerated Saṃhitās, and for that belongs to one of the four vedas. Thus each Veda has its particular Brāhmaṇas, Āraṇyakas and Upaniṣads.

From the above discussion it is clear that the word 'Veda' does not signify, as Winternitz rightly observes, "one single literary work, as for instance the word 'korān', nor a complete collection of a certain number of books, compiled at some particular time, as the world 'Bible', or as the word 'Tipitaka', the Bible of the Buddhists, but a whole great literature, which arose in the course of many centuries, and through centuries has been handed down from generation to generation by verbal transmis-

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sion, till finally it was declared by a younger generation but even then at some prehistoric period—to be 'sacred knowledge', 'divine revelation', as much on account of its great age, as on account of its contents. It is here not a matter of a 'canon' which might have been fixed at some councils; the belief in the 'sacredness' of this literature arose, as it were, spontaneously, and was seldom seriously disputed"[5].

The wide range of literature covered by the term 'Veda'.

As our work is concerned with the Brāhmaṇas we shall first discuss the etymology of the term 'Brāhmaṇa' and enumerate the characteristics of this class of vedic texis. After this enumeration we shall take up the discussion of the A.B., K.B., S.B. and the T.B. in particular, on which the present work hinges.

The term 'Brāhmaṇa' has been variously interpreted. It has come from the word 'Brahman' which means both the Veda and the Brāhmaṇa or the priestly class who are versed in the Veda. Some scholars hold that Brāhmaṇa taxts are so called due to their connection with the Veda; that is, to say, they take the term 'Brahman' in the sense of the Veda. Some again, with show of cogent arguments, take the term to mean, 'sayings of Brāhmaṇa priests versed in the three vedas relating to sacrificial rites'. This group takes the term 'Brahman' which is the origin of the word 'Brāhmaṇa' to mean Brāhmaṇa or priests versed in the sacred lore. There can be no doubt as regards this meaning or significance of the term 'Brahman'. 'Brahma vai'. Brāhmaṇah', says the S.B. which means 'Brahman is Brāhmaṇa, the priestly class'. Patanjali, the author of the Mahābhaṣya, while commenting on Panini 5-1-1, observes,— "The words 'Brahman' and 'Brāhmaṇa' convey the same meaning".[6] The erudite scholar Dayānanda-Sarasvatī in his introduction to the commentary on the Ṛgveda (Rg-bhāṣya-bhūmikā) remarks,— "Brahman is a name of the Brāhmaṇas. Here is the authority;

Two views regarding the etymological sense of the word 'Brāhmaṇa'.

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[5] History of Indian Literature, vol. I, pages 52, 53.

[6] 'Samanārthāvetau brahman-śabdo brāhmaṇa-śabdaśea'.

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the Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa says,— Brahman is verily the Brāhmaṇa".[7]

Julius Eggeling in the introduction to his English rendering of the S.B. and Martin Haug in the introduction to his edition of the A.B. support the view that the word 'Brāhmaṇa' means the sayings and speculations of the learned priests regarding sacrifice. Observes Eggeling,— 'They are essentially digests of a floating mass of single discourses or dicta on various points of the ceremonial of worship, ascribed to individual teachers, and handed down orally in the theological schools. Single discourses of this kind were called Brāhmaṇa,— probably, either because they were intended for the instruction and guidance of priests (Brāhmin) generally ; or, because, they were, for the most part, the authoritative utterances of such as were thoroughly versed in the vedic and sacrificial lore and competent to act as Brāhmaṇs or superintending priests'.[8] Martin Haug lends support to the second half of this observation of Eggeling, i.e., the connection of the term Brāhmaṇa with the Brahman or Superintending priest. He says,— 'Etymologically the word (Brāhmaṇa) is derived from Brahman which properly signifies the Brahman priest who must know all the vedas, and understand the whole course and meaning of the sacrifice. He is supposed to be a perfect master of divinity and has in this capacity to direct and superintend the sacrificial ceremonies. The most eminent of this class of priests laid down rules for the proper performance of sacrificial rites, explained them, and defended their own opinions, on such topics against those of their antagonists ; . . . . the dictum of such a Brahman priest who passed as a great authority, was called a Brāhmaṇa'.[9] Two of the most noted vedic scholars of India, Swami Dayānanda Sarasvatī and Satyavrata Samaśramī are one with Martin Haug in their contention regarding the etymological meaning of the term 'Brāhmaṇa', with the only difference that according to them the Br. texts are the dicta and learned deliberations on socrificial ritual not only of the particular priests called Brahman but of all

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[7] 'Brahmeti brāhmaṇānāṃ nāmāsti. Atra Pramāṇam. 'Brahma vai brāhmaṇaḥ'.

[8] Introduction to Part I, vol. I, Eggeling's edition of the S. B.

[9] Introduction to Aitareya Brāhmaṇa translated by Martin Haug.

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the learned priests who were versed in all the vedas. Dayānanda Sarasvatī maintains,—'Those works are called Brāhmaṇas which are explanations of the Vedas (saṃhitās) given by Brahman seers versed in all the four vedas'.[10] This view is plausible and is advocated by Satyavrata Samaśramī in his 'Aitareyālocanam' which in an introduction to his edition of the A.B. published by the Asiatic Society of Bengal. The Brāhmaṇas contain the accumulated wisdom and speculations of generations of vedic divines.

Denotation of the Brāhmaṇas.

We shall now launch on a discussion regarding the denotation or significance of the term Brāhmaṇa". What actually the Brāhmaṇas stand for? Various definitions, rather descriptions are met with in the ancient texts. Jaimini, the author of the Pūrva-mimāṃsā gives the definition,—'Śeṣe Brāhmaṇa-śabdaḥ'[11] which means besides the mantras the remaining bulk of the vedic literature is called 'Brāhmaṇa'. This definition, supported and approved by Sāyanācāryya etc., does not throw any light on the characteristics of the Br. literature. Apastamba defines Brāhmaṇas as,—'Karmacodanā Brāhmaṇāni', i.e., to say, Brāhmaṇas are injunctions for the performance of sacrificial rites. Apastamba further elucidates the term 'Karmacodanā' by giving a detailed characteristics of the Brāhmaṇas.

Vidhi.

According to him the Brāhmaṇas deal with the following six topics, —Vidhi, Arthavadā, Nindā, Praśaṃsā, Purākalpa and Parakṛti. Vidhi means injunctions for the performance of particular rites. All sentences in the Brāhmaṇas expressed in the potential mood, such as 'Yayeta' 'he should sacrifice', samset 'he ought to recite' etc., come under the purview of Vidhi. Arthavadā comprises the numerous explanatory remarks on the meaning of mantras and particular rites. These explanations or Arthavadās form the speculative part of Brs. wherein may be traced the beginnings of Indian philosophy, grammar and philology. We may cite the following as an instance in point. Fre-

Six topics of the Brāhmaṇas explained & illustrated.

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[10] Ṛg-bhāṣya-bhūmikā- 'Caturvedavidbhirbrahmabhih brāhmaṇaih maharṣibhih Proktāni yāni veda-vyākhyānāni tēni brāhmaṇāni'.

[11] Pūrva-mimāṃsā-sutra- 2-1-33.

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quently it is stated that one who performs an important sacrifice like Agnihotra or Gavāmayana attains 'Sājujya' or union, 'sārupya' or same form and 'sālokya' or same place with the god invoked in the sacrifice. Later on, these three terms came to signify three different stages in the attainment of supreme beatitude or final emancipation called Mokṣa or Kaivalya in Indian philosophy and religion.

Arthavadā.

Nindā or censure consists in criticism, refutation and denunciation of the opponents' views. This mainly ferers to the controversial passages that occur in all the Br. texts. As is quite natural there existed sharp difference of opinion amongst these priests and divines of antiquity as to the procedure of certain rites, or the choice of particular hymns and the proper import of mantras. One school criticised the practice and preaching of another school and condemned it in the strongest terms. Frequently, the readers come across such remarks in the Brāhmaṇas as,—'it should not be done in that way' ('tat tathā na kartavyam), 'but this opinion is not to be attended to,' 'it should not be recited in that manner' etc. Such psasages bespeak censure. In the S. B., for example, we find numerous remarks censuring particular injunctions of the T. B.

Nindā.

Prasamsa.

Praśaṃsā means eulogy, recommendation. That which is praised is recommended ; whenever a rite or a hymn is eulogised, the implication is, one is enjoined to practice that rite or utter that hymn. Likewise when a rite or procedure is censured it is implied that one should shun that rite or procedure. This truth is couched in the current dictum of the Mimāṃsā system of philosophy,—'That which is praised is enjoined ; what is censured is to be avoided'.[12] Thus Praśaṃsā mainly comprises those phrases which declare that the performance of particular rites, with the proper knowledge, produces the desired effect. Such passages very often than not contain the phrase,—'ya evaṃ veda' i.e., he who possesses such a knowledge.

'Purākalpa' refers to the performance of sacrificial rites in former times shrouded in the mists of antiquity. This topic

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[12] 'Yat stuyate tat vidhīyate, yannindyate tannisidhyate'.

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of the Brāhmaṇas includes many legends connected with the performance of sacrifices by the gods. Under this head also comes the numerous stories of Titano-machia or fights between the Devas (Gods) and Asuras (demons) to which is attributed the origin of many rites. This interesting element or topic of the Br. texts forms the legendary background of the whole sacrificial ritual. The Gods are the originators of every sacrificial ritual; hence, all rites are traced to them and even to Prajāpati, the Supreme Being, the lord of all creatures who performed the first sacrifice from which creation started. Scholars like Martin Haug, Winternitz etc., have given a historical interpretation of the legends of the fights between the Devas and Asuras. They find in these legends the differenc of views on religion and rituals that obtained between the ancient or Vedic Aryans represented by the Devas and the ancient Iranians or Zoroastrians represented by the Asuras, the followers of Ahuramazdā. The term 'Ahura' in Ahuramazdā or Great God has come from the word 'Asura'. The Zoroastrian Iranians are often referred to by the Greek writers as Asura nation and Zarathustra or Zoroaster as the prophet of the Asura nation. The Zorastrian Iranians were dissentors and this religious dissension separated the Iranians from their Indian brothers though both these branches of the Aryan family claim descent from a common stock. This dissension and separation, this great schism took place before the composition of the Brāhmaṇas. This schism is an important landmark in the history of the Aryan civilisation.

Purākalpa.

The last characteristic feature, i.e., 'Parakṛti' means the achievement or feats of others. This head comprises the stories of particular performances of renowned śrotriyas or priests versed in the lore of sacrifice, stories of Dakṣinā or gifts presented by the Kings to the Brāhmaṇas. In addition to these it also contains stories of success achieved by sacrificers due to their sacrifice and gifts. The credit of the success or achievement goes to the priests of the sacrifices. The last pañcikā of A. B. is replete with this class of stories and anecdotes. The line of demarcation between Purākalpa and Parakṛti is very slender. As pointed out by orthodox scholars the difference is one of quantity and not quality. Whereas Purākalpa comprises legends of heroic

Parakṛti.

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and other deeds of many persons, Parakṛti relates to the various achievements of one person. Parakṛti is also termed Parakriyā.

The six heads or topics mentioned above are often brought under two main heads only, viz., Vidhi and Arthavādā. In this broad-based classification consisting only of two heads, Arthavādā comprises all the topics except Vidhi or injunction, i.e., all the topics that are not mandatory in character. Hence the five topics Arthavāda, Nindā, Praśaṃsā, Purākalpa and Parakṛti come under the general head of Arthavāda.

Importance of the Brāhmaṇa texts.

The importance of the Brāhmaṇa literature can never be over-estimated. The Br. texts are invaluable records not only of sacrificial paraphernalia but also of ancient Indian thought and civilisation which finds expression through legendary lore, metaphysical thought, social and political customs and linguistic speculations. Eggeling observes,—'While the Brāhmaṇas are thus our oldest sources from which a comprehensive view of the sacrificial ceremonial can be obtained, they also throw a great deal of light on the earliest metaphysical and linguistic speculations of the Hindus. Another, even more interesting feature of these works, consist in the numerous legends scattered through them.....To the student of sanskrit literature, the Brāhmaṇas with their supplements, the Āraṇyakas and their metaphysical appendages, the Upaniṣads are of the highest importance as the only genuine prose works which the Sanskrit, as a popular language, has produced. The Brāhmaṇas offer a rich field of enquiry for comparative study of syntax.'[13] The Brāhmaṇas are, maintains Winternitz, 'indispensable to the understanding of the whole of the later religious and philosophical literature of the Indians, and highly interesting for the general science of religion. The Brāhmaṇas are as invaluable authorities to the student of religion, for the history of sacrifice and priesthood, as the Saṃhitās of the Yajurveda are for the history of prayer.'[14] In the opinion of Max Muller the great savant and Indologist, there are 'passages in the Brāhmaṇas full of genuine thought and feeling, and most valuable as pictures of life, and as records of early struggles,

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[13] The S.B. ; introduction to Vol. I. (sacred Books of the East.).
[14] History of Indian Literature Vol. I, page 187.

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which have left no trace in the literature of other nations.'[15] In discussing the importance of the Brāhmaṇas scholars both eastern and western have emphasized the ritualistic, metaphysical, linguistic and legendary aspects ; but be it mentioned here that besides these aspects the Br. texts are records of the social and political life of the later Vedic age. The evolution of caste system, the struggle for social ascendancy between the ruling class and priestly class, the callings of different classes, the geographical background, education of men and women, marriage system, occupations, agriculture and other economic conditions, music, flora and fauna, coronation ceremony, different types of monarchy and territory, democratic elements in kingship, paramount sovereignty, the cabinet, political implications of various sacrifices, the then Aryan Calendar and astronomy, knowledge of medicine and diseases, disposal of dead bodies and the like social and political data of ancient Indian civilisation of the later Vedic period are met with in the Brāhmaṇas as such they are invaluable and indispensable for all students of Indian history and civilisation. Besides sacrifice and rituals the beginnings of popular religions such as Viṣṇu-cult, Śiva-cult etc., also trace their origin in the Br. texts. Taking into consideration all these factors and judging from this perspective it is highly misleading to define the Brāhmaṇas as mere manuals of sacrifice or liturgical texts ; in fact, they are compendiums of ancient Indian culture and civilisation in its multifarious aspects.

Names of the principal Brāhmaṇas of all the Vedas are enumerated below. To the Ṛgveda belongs the A. B. and the Kauṣitaki Br. which is alos known as Śānkhyāyana Br. We shall take up the discussion of the A. B. later on in details. The latter, viz., the K. B. consists of thirty Adhyāyas. It is named after the great teacher Kauṣitaka. The first six Adhyāyas deal with the food-sacrifice which consists of the culling of fire, fire sacrifice, new and full moon sacrifices and the sacrifices of the seasons. Adhyāyas from the seventh to the thirtieth deal with the Soma--sacrifice.

Vedas and their Brāhmaṇas.

To the Sāmaveda belongs several Brs. Kumārila Bhatta observed in his 'Trantravārttika' that there are eight Brāhmaṇas

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[15] 'History of Ancient Sanskrit Literature', Page 408.

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of the Sāmaveda. Sāyanācārya in his introduction to the Sāmavidhāna Brāhmaṇa has enumerated them. These are the Tāṇḍya-Mahā-Br. or Pañcaviṁśa Br., the Saḍviṁśa Br., the Chāndogya Br., Jaiminīya or Talavakāra Br., Sāmavidhāna, Devatādhyāya, Ārṣeya and Vaṁśa. The last four of the above Brāhmaṇas are nothing but the index of the Sāmaveda. These Brāhmaṇas are full of mystical speculations and are very important historically. The Brāhmaṇa of the Tāṇḍins is divided into forty chapters. The first twentyfive chapters form the Tāṇḍya or Pañcaviṁśa Br. The Saḍviṁśa Br. consists of the next five chapters. The following ten chapters go to the compilation of the Chāndogya Br. Of these ten chapters, the first two form the Mantras Br. and the next eight the Chāndogya-Upaniṣad. The Tāṇḍya-mahā-brāhmaṇa is named after its author, Sage Tāṇḍi. As it contains twentyfive chapters it is also called Pañcaviṁśa Br. The speciality of this Br. is that it supplies us with the details of innumerable varieties of the Soma Sacrifice ranging from the Jyotiṣṭoma to the sessional sacrifice that covers a thousand years for its completion.

The Jaiminiya or Talavakāra Br. treats of various ceremonials and contains the Kena-Upaniṣad. It is divided into two parts, Pūrva and Uttara.

The Sāmavidhāna Br. explains the application of incantations for various superstitious purposes.

The Devatādhyāya, Ārṣeya and Vaṁśa Brāhmaṇas furnish us with the names of the deities of the Sāmavedic hymns, and a genealogical table of the teachers of the Sāmaveda respectively.

The Brāhmaṇa of the Kṛṣṇa or Black Yajurveda is incorporated in its Saṁhitā portion. These are the Brāhmaṇas of the Katha and Maitrāyaṇī schools. The important Brāhmaṇa of this veda is the Taittirīya Br. which is nothing but a continuation of the Taittirīya Saṁhitā and contains only later additions to the Saṁhitā. In this respect the Black Yajurveda is a departure from the other Vedas. In this Veda the characteristics or demarcating features of the Saṁhitā and the Br. have been mixed up ; there is overlapping of boundaries. There are profuse Br. passages in the Saṁhitā portion and vice versa. This mixture of the Saṁhitā and Br. is a peculiar feature of the Black Yajurveda which is not met with in the other Vedas including the white Yajurveda. For this characteristic, viz.,

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overlapping of Samhitā and Br. texts the Black Yajurveda is called 'Kṛṣṇa' which besides its current meaning of 'black' also means 'mixed' in Sanskrit. The T. B. contains three Kāṇḍas, also called Aṣṭakas, twentyeight prapāṭhakas and 353 anuvākas.

To the white or Śukla Yajurveda belongs the famous Śatapatha Br., 'the Brārmaṇa of the Hundred pa'hs', so called because of its one hundred Adhyāyas or lessons. There are two recensions of this Br. that of the Kanvas and that of the Mādhyandinas.

To the Atharvaveda belongs the Gopatha Brāhmaṇa which is divided into two parts, Pūrva (former) and Uttara (latter). There are five Prapāṭhakas in the first part and six in the second part. Tradition has it that this Br. originally consisted of a hundred chapters (Prapāṭhakas) of which eleven chapters are now extant, the rest being lost to the world. From its language and contents the G. B. appears to be much later than the other Brs. It observations on the period of Brahmacaryya, enumeration of the sacrifices etc., are later developments ; in some cases its observations appear to belong to the post-brāhmaṇical age.

Now the contents of the two Brāhmaṇas the A. B. and the S. B. will be described in details as these two Brs. are of the highest importance and are veritable mines of information. The A. B. is a collection of the sayings of ancient learned divines and philosophers illustrative and explanatory of the duties of the priests of the Ṛgvedic category known as Hotṛs who used to invoke the deities in sacrifices reciting hymns from the Ṛgveda Samhitā. It consists of eight books termed Pañcikās ; each pañcikā consists of five chapters or adhyāyas making forty chapters in all. Each chapter is divided into many sub-chapters called Khaṇḍas, the total number of Khaṇḍas being 285. This Br. is mostly written in prose and partly in verse. Of these forty chapters the first sixteen deal with the Somayāga or Soma sacrifice known as Agniṣṭoma or Jyotiṣṭoma which is the model or Prakṛti of all Soma sacrifices. The first sixteen chapters thus treat of the duties of the Chief Ṛgvedic priest Hotṛ. at the Agniṣṭoma soma sacrifice only. The ceremony generally lasts for five days. The ceremonies of the first four days are only introductory consisting of the election of priests (Hotṛ-varaṇam), the initiation of the sacrificer or Yajamāna called Dikṣanīya-

The Contents of the A.B.

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iṣṭi, the Prāyanīya or opening iṣṭi (sacrifice), the purchase of Soma (Soma-Kraya), the ceremony of doing hospitality to king Soma (ātithya-iṣṭi), the Pravargya, Upasad, Agni-soma-praṇa-yanam, Havirdhāna-praṇayanam, the animal sacrifice (Paśu), the three pressings and libations of soma juice called Soma-savana taking place in the morning, mid-day and evening, and lastly the concluding or Udayanīya iṣṭi, the ablution known as Avabhṛta. The above ceremonies covering the first four days are absolutely necessary and serve as a prelude to the actual sacrifice which takes place on the fifth day. The universal character of the Agniṣṭoma and its significance is treated specially in the fourth chapter of the third book (Pañcikā) i.e., the fourteenth chapter. In the last chapter of the third book and first two chapters of the fourth book, the principal modifications of Agniṣṭoma are mentioned and briefly described, viz.—the Ukthya, Ṣoḍaśi and Atirātra along with Aśvina śāstra. The third chapter of the fourth book embodies the principal rules for the performances of the Hotṛ priests relating to sattras or sacrificial sessions which require a long period of time, in some cases a complete year or a century even for their completion. The model or prakṛti of Sattra type of sacrifice is Gavāmayana which covers a whole year consisting of 361 days. The duties of the Ṛgvedic priest concerning the Gavāmayana sattra are enumerated from the sixth Khaṇḍa of the seventeenth chapter till the end of the eighteenth chapter. The last two chapters of the fourth book and the first four chapters of the fifth book describe very minutely the duties of the Hotṛ priest during the ten principal days of Dvādaśāha, which may be performed as a Sattra, or as a Ahīna, i.e., a soma sacrifice lasting for more than one and less than thirteen days.

The last chapter of the fifth book, i.e. the twenty-fifth chapter deals with various matters such as the penances required of an Agnihotri when he commits mistakes or when some misfortune such as expiry of his wife etc., befalls him. It also enumerates the expiatory rites to be performed by the Superintending priest Brahman for the mistakes committed by any one of the performing priests.

The whole of the sixth book treats of the duties of the minor Hotṛ-priests, at the great soma sacrifice called Ṣaḍaha.

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At the beginning of the sixth book there are some remarks on the two priests Gravastut and Subrahmaṇya.

The seventh and the eighth books deal mainly with the sacrifices of the Kṣattriyas or the ruling class and the relationship in which the princes stand to the priestly class or Brāhmaṇas. Thus from a historical point of view these two books of the A. B. are of vital importance. The seventh book describes first the vivisection of the sacrificial animal into thirtysix single pieces, and their distribution among the officiating priests, the sacrificer, his wife, and other persons connected with the performance of the sacrifice.

The thirty-second chapter deals with penances or expiatory rites for neglects on the part of an Agnihotri or mishaps which might befall him. This is a continuation of the fifth chapter of the fifth book.

The remaining chapters describe the important ceremony known as royal inauguration or consecration (abhiṣeka). The coronation or consecration ceremony of ancient India is described in detail in connection with the Rājasūya ceremony. In Chapter XXXIII the interesting story of Śunah-śepa is narrated. On account of its containing R K. verses and Gāthās as well, it was to be narrated to the King-designate on the day of his inauguration by the Hotṛ.

Three kinds of inauguratory sacrifices for the king, called the Rājasūya are described, viz., Abhiṣeka, Punarabhiṣeka and Mahabhiṣeka, inauguration, re-inauguration and great inauguration ceremonies. Aindra-Mahābhiṣeka or the great consecration or coronation ceremony of Indra is the model for the inauguration of all earthly kings. These ceremonies are called abhiṣeka (literally, sprinkling), because one main item of the royal consecration ceremony consists in sprinkling holy-water collected from different sources on the head of the king.

The last chapter of the A. B. is taken up with the appointment by the king of a properly qualified Brāhmaṇa to the office of domestic priest called Purohita. There is also an eulogy of the office of Purohita (Purohitapraśaṃsā). The ceremonial part of the last chapter is made interesting by short stories of kings who were said to have performed the great consecration ceremony, and as a result thereof attained to paramount sovereignty on earth. The last khaṇḍa of the eighth book, i.e., the

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concluding khaṇḍa of the whole Brāhmaṇa enumerates some magical performances called Kṛtya by means of which a king can secretly destroy his enemies.

The authorship of the A. B. is attributed to one Mahidāsa. His mother's name was Itara and hence Itara's son Mahidāsa is called Aitareya; 'It is said by the scholar Mahidāsa, son of Itarā, says Aitareya-Āraṇyaka [16]; thus according to the Indian Tradition the name of the A. B. is derived from Itarā, the author's mother. In his introduction to the A. B. Sayanācāryya narrates the following story regarding the name and origin of the Brāhmaṇa itself on the authority of tradition. A seer of yore had many wives one of whom was named Itarā. She begot a son called Mahidāsa, who is mentioned as Mahidāsa Aitareya in Aitareya Āraṇyaka. The sage preferred his other wives to Itarā; hence Itarā's son Mahidāsa also did not find favour with his father; rather he was shabbily treated by the sage. The age openly insulted him and hurt his feelings one day by placing the children begotten of his other wives on his lap to the exclusion of Mahidāsa. The mother Itarā rudely shocked this ill-treatment meted out to her beloved son by her husband offered fervent prayers to Mother Earth the presiding deity of her family. Thus propitiated Goddess Earth appeared in her radiant celestial form in the midst of the assembly, placed Mahidāsa on a golden throne and as a token of his superiority to all other children in learning granted him a boon which was revealed to Mahidāsa in the form of a Brāhmaṇa. Thus the complete A. B. beginning with the words, 'Agnir vai devānāmavamsh (1-1-1) and ending with 'Stṛṇute Stṛṇute' (8-5-5) and then the Āraṇyaka commencing with 'Atha mahāvratam' (1-1-1) and closing with the words 'ācāryaḥ ācāryaḥ' flashed in Mahidāsa's mind as divine revelations.

The authorship of The A.B.

The S. B. belongs to the Vājansaneyi Saṃhitā or white Yajurveda as stated above. It is called Śatapatha. The world 'Śata' means a hundred and the name is very significant as this Br. consists of one hundred lectures or lessons called adhyāyas. This is the best known, the most extensive, and undoubtedly, on the merit of its contents the most important of all the Brs.

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[16] 1-8-2,- 'Etadu sma vai tad vidvānāha Mahidāsa Aitareyah'.

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This Br. in the words of the great Indologist Macdonell, 'is, next to the R. V., the most important production in the whole range of vedic literature'[17]. The Vājasaneyi saṃhitā admits of two recensions or Śākhās, viz., Mādhyandina and Kāṇva. Likewise the S. B. also is handed down to us in these two recensions of which the Mādhyandina Śākhā has gained wide celebrity. Our references to this Br. in this work are from the Mādhyandina recension. In this recension of the S. B. the hundred Adhyāyas are distributed among fourteen books called Kāṇḍas. Each book or Kāṇḍa is divided into several Adhyāyas which are subdivided into several Prapāṭhakas; the Prepāṭhakas in their turn are subdivided into several Brāhmaṇas which again are subdivided into many Kāṇḍikās. Thus in all there are fourteen Kāṇḍas, sixty-eight Prapāṭhakas, 438 Brāhmaṇas and 7624 Kaṇḍikās in the Mādhyandina recension of the S. B. In the usual procedure of references the Prapāṭhaka is not mentioned, the rest four divisions are mentioned; e.g., the reference 10-4-2-22 will mean the 22nd Kaṇḍikā of the second Brāhmaṇa of the fourth Adhyāya belonging to the tenth Kāṇḍa or book.

In the Kāṇva recension there are seventeen Kaṇḍas, 104 Adhyāyas, 435 Brāhmaṇas and 6806 Kaṇḍikās. The name Śatapatha justly applies to the Mādhyandina Śākhā which actually consists of one hundred Adhyāyas whereas the Kāṇva Śākhā consists of four more chapters. In the former, amongst the fourteen books the first nine are a continuous commentary on the first eighteen sections of the V. S. A bare outline of the contents of this Br. is given below as it is not possible to give a detailed content of its hundred lessons which are so vast and varied in their character. The first Kāṇḍa treats of the famous sacrifice known as Darśa-purṇamāsa. The second Kāṇḍa deals with various sacrifices such as the daily rite of Agnihotra, Piṇḍa-pitṛyajña, the Dākṣāyana sacrifice, an iṣṭi type of sacrifice called Navānna and the celebrated Cāturmāsya which consists of various rites and performances such as Varuṇa-praghāsa, Śākamedha, Pitṛyeṣṭi, iṣṭi called Tryamvaka, Śunasīri etc. The third and fourth Kāṇḍas give the details

Contents of the Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa.

[17] A History of Sanskrit Literature, Page 212.

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of the celebrated Soma-sacrifice consisting of dikṣā or initiation, the commencing sacrifice or Prāyaniya iṣṭi, the purchase of Soma creeper and the placing of soma in the cart, rites of hospitality or Ātithya-iṣṭi done to King Soma, Upasad iṣṭi creation of the great altar, pressing of Soma juice, rites relating to the slaughter of animal, offering of animal flesh and ricepap, Upayāja and Patnī-samyāja, (rites concerning the wife of the Yajamāna or sacrificer), Soma libations, receiving of different vessels called Grahas in the Soma sacrifice by the priests, Anubandha and Avabhṛta rites etc. The fifth Kāṇḍa deals with the two important sacrifices known as Rājasūya and Vājapeya connected with the royal coronation or inauguration, and consecration of Kings. The accounts of Abhiṣeka or the consecration of Kings are to be found only in the Atharva-Veda and the Brāhmaṇas, particularly the A. B. and the S. B. Hence from the historical stand point this book merits special mention and is of great importance. The then status of the king, his cabinet, the representative persons of the kingdom, the status of queens, the relation between the king and his ministers, the relation between the ruler and the ruled, the democratic elements in ancient Indian Kingship, different types of monarchy and territory, the vox populi in matters of administration, the tax-system and the like paraphernalia of the state and politics are met with in the sacrifices having a political end-in-view such as the Rājasūya, Vājapeya, Aśvamedha, Sautrāmanī, Puruṣamedha etc. The Kāṇḍas from the sixth to the tenth mainly deal with the culling of the sacrificial fire and construction of the fire-altar which is symbolic of Prajāpati, Agni, Yajamāna and the creation of the universe. The mystic science of Agni called Agni-rahasya or Agnividyā imparted by Śāṇḍilya occurs in this protion of the Brāhmaṇa. Yājñavalkya the renowned sage of ancient India is the hero eponymous whose majestic figure looms large in the whole field of the V.S. and its Brāhmaṇa ; he champions the cause of the white Yajurveda school against the Black Yajurveda school. Only in the five books from the sixth to the tenth of the S.B. occurs the name of the teacher Śāṇḍilya to the exclusion of Yājñavalkya.

The eleventh book treats of Paśubandha, the five Mahāyajñas or great sacrifices, an iṣṭi called Mitrāvinda, Darśapurṇamāsa-sesa etc. The twelfth book deals with the satra or

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sessional sacrifice called Dvādaśāha, the annual or samrātsava satra and the expietory rite for excess in drinking etc., known as Sautrāmanī.

The thirteenth book gives the details of four important sacrifices Aśvamedha or the horse-sacrifice, Puruṣa-medha, Sarvamedha and Pitṛmedha. Of these the Aśvamedha which has gained wide celebrity merits special mention as it is connected with paramount sovereignty. The chapters on the Aśvamedha are a standing testimony to the constitutional status of the monarch, queens, the royal paraphenalia, the attendants of the four queens, the arms and weapons carried by the protectors of the sacrificial horse, the importance of the chariot-wright class, the hierarchy in the types of monarchy etc. The description of the horse sacrifice also gives us an inkling into the military skill and organisation of the Vedic Aryans and the arms and ammunitions invented by them. The vivisection of the horse and the naming of the different parts of its body bear testimony to the knowledge of anatomy and surgery of the ancients. In the eighth Adhyāya of the thirteenth book the funeral ceremonies of the Vedic age, the disposal of the dead and construction of burial mounds of different sizes according to different sexes and castes of the dead have been embodied in connection with Pitṛmedha. This piece merits importance as a record of the then social custom.

The last i.e., the fourteenth book deals with Pravargya and contains the great metaphysical and theological discourse known as Bṛhadāraṇyaka-Upaniṣat which is worth its weight in gold. The importance of this Upaniṣat can never be over-estimated. King Janaka's court was a great seat of learning which witnessed many learned debates, theological disputations and metaphysical discourses. The historical debates that took place between Yājñavalkya and other sages, between Yājñavalkya and Gārgī the most learned female savant and seer who stands out pre-eminently in the field of female scholarship of ancient India, the philosophical discourse between Yājñvalkya and his God-intoxicated wife Maitreyī who longed for immortality in preference to ephemeral earthly riches and mortality,—all these memorable facts are recorded in the Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad. The great Śankarācāryya, the saviour of Hinduism and the champion of Vedānta also inexhaustibly

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draws materials from this Upaniṣad to support his arguments launched against the Buddhistic doctrines and his reasonings to prove the tenets of Advait Vedānta. His scholarly commentary on this Upaniṣad is a work of profound erudition and massive scholarship.

Authorship of the S.B.

The A.B. derives its name from its author Mahidāsa-Aitareya son of Itarā) but the S.B. derives its name from its hundred chapters that make up the bulk of this Br. Tradition ascribes the authorship of the S.B. to the versatile scholar, sage Yājñavalkya who is the founder of the school of the white Yajurveda. He is the spokesman of the whole of the S.B. except the portion on Agni-vidyā which is ascribed to Śāṇḍilya as noted above. The A.B. gives the notion of single authorship as it presents a unity of impression whereas the S.B. does not present such a unity and seems to be the product of different authors pieced together. The language of the S.B. does not present a uniformity or homogeneity like that of the A.B.

What is meant by 'Śākhā' or recension.

It has been noted above that there are two recensions or śākhās of the S.B. We shall now explain what is meant by a Śākhā of the Veda generally translated as 'recension' or school. The sacred lore comprised by the term 'Veda' was handed down from generation to generation through oral transmission. It is but quite natural and in the fitness of things that some variations in the modes of recitation, in the practical application of the mantras would take place according to time, clime and different teachers. Thus crept in variations in readings, variations in pronunciations and order of texts. These inevitable variations or changes lie at the root of different recensions or śākhās of the Veda. The Pūraṇas mention innumerable recensions of the Vedas. Thus various śākhās of the RK, Yajuṣ and Sāman are recorded in the Kūrma-Pūraṇa (1-51), in the Viṣṇu-pūraṇa (3.4.16 to 3.4.25), Bhāgavata-puraṇa (1-4-23 and 1-12-6) etc. Patanjali, the celebrated author of the Mahābhāṣya ascribes a thousand recensions, śākhās, to the S.V., a hundred śākhās to the Y.V., twentyone to the R.V. and nine to the A.V.'[18] But most of

[18] Paspaśa,- 'Ekaviṃsatidhā vāhvṛcyam, ekaśatamadhvaryuśākhāh, sahasravartmā sāmavedaḥ'.

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these recensions or schools are obsolete and untraced. Now, every śākhā is supposed to have its Br. Hence there were as many Brs. as were the śākhās. Many labour under the delusion that the original Saṁhitā texts become different according to different recensions; that the Saṁhitā text becomes completely changed when recast in a recension. That is to say, they think the multiplications of recensions of the same Veda leads to the multiplicity of the Veda. In other words, one veda becomes many vedas according to its recensions. But this is wholly a wrong idea. Not withstanding its various recensions the original Saṁhitā remains one and the same; hence the study of one of its recension means the study of the whole Saṁhitā. The original Saṁhitā underlies its diverse sakhas as the abiding unity. The R.V. has twentyone recensions. The study of one of its recension means the study of the R.V. not that the perusal of all its recensions put together will constitute the perusal of the R.V. Thus the alleged 'one thousand recensions of the S.V. mean the thousand different modes of changing of the Sāman', observes Dayānand Sarasvati.[19] The original Saṁhitā remains the same in each recension; it does not vary in its essence, only its forms vary. 'The difference in the modes of instruction, pronunciation etc., lies at the root of the difference of the recensions, not the difference of original Saṁhitās.'[20] Hence it is, that Sāyanācārya is universally regarded as the commentator of all the vedas though, in fact, he has written the commentary on one particular śākhā of each veda. The verbal transmission of the veda through countless teachers and pupils from generation to generation covers a long passage of time and constitutes the tradition (sampradāya) of Vedic study. These teachers and pupils, who in their turn, became teachers again

Mistaken notion about the import of the term 'Śākhā'.

The original Saṁahitā remains one and the same notwithstanding the different Śākhās.

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[19] Veda-bhāṣya-bhūmikā ;—'Sahasra-vartmā sāmaveda ityasya sahasram gityupāyā iti bhāvah'.

[20] Satyavrata Śāmaśramī : Aitareyālocanam, page 126.—'Adhyayanaveda eva ṣākhā-bheda—nidānam na tu granthabheda iti. Ekaika-vedasy āneka-ṣākhāsatve pi tāttvika—bhedā kābāt'.

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in unbroken continuity are responsible for the creation of different śākhās that cropped up at different times and places. 'The vedas acquired different recensions through the pupils, grand pupils and great grand pupils, 'says the Bhāgavatapūraṇa.[21] The Brāhmaṇa belonging to a particular recension of a veda has certain characteristics peculiarly its own concerning intonation, accent, movement of tongue and fingers etc ; e.g. the S.B. belonging to the Mādhyandina śākhā of the V.S. or the Śukla-Yajurveda has only two accents, acute and grave ; the 'ya' is pronounced as 'ja' ; the 'ṣa' is pronounced as 'kha' ; the 'va' is duplicated in both reading and writing when it is the initial letter of a word ; the movement of the finger is prohibited when uttering a visarga (aḥ) etc.

The date of the Veda.

The date of the Veda is a bone of contention amongst the scholars of the east and the west. The term 'Veda' comprises a huge mass of literature, not a few books ; it is a whole library and not merely a shelf of books. The samhitas, the Brs., the Āraṇyakas and the Upaniṣads comprised by the Vedic literature make up a rich library of books that belongs to eternity, not time and has withstood the ravage of time. Hence it is not an easy matter to fix the date of composition of such a vast mass of literature, the composition of which must have covered several centuries. Indologists have taxed their ingenuity to fix the uppermost and lowermost limits of the Vedic age but most of them failed to tackle the problem with sagacity and ingenuity. No amount of discussion, research or perusal of the texts helps us in fixing the date of the vedic literature. The problem is a knotty one and eludes our grasp and comprehension. The long passage of time stands a bar to correct estimation and clouds the issue. Sweeps of imagination and stretches of fancy lead us nowhere and are shut out from the domain of history. Rightly does the wise savant Max Müller remark on this issue ; 'Whether the Vedic hymns were composed in 1000, or 1500 or 2000, or 3000 B.C., no power on earth will ever determine.'[22] Another German Indologist of wide re-

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[21] 1-4-24,—'Śiṣyaih prasiṣyaistacchiṣyaih vedāste śākhino 'bhavan'.

[22] Gifford Lectures on Physical religion (1889).

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putation, Winternitz observes ; 'We cannot, however, explain the development of the whole of this great literature, if we assume as date—a date as round' about 1200 to 1500 B.C. as its starting point. We shall probably have to date the beginning of this development about 2000 to 3000 B.C. and the end of it between 750 and 500 B.C. The more prudent course, however, is to steer clear of any fixed dates, and to guard against the extremes of a stupendously ancient period or a ludicrously modern epoch'[23]. The reputed vedic scholar and patriot Bālgangādhar Tilak of hallowed memory ascribes the early vedic literature, i.e., the ṚK. Saṁhitā to 4000 B. C. He concludes his arguments based on astronomical data in the following words : 'We can thus satisfactorily account for all the opinions and traditions current about the age of the vedas amongst ancient and modern scholars in India and in Europe, if we place the Vedic period at about 4000 B.C. in strict accordance with the astronomical references and facts recorded in the ancient literature of India'[24].

The observations of these great Indologists referred to above also hold good regarding the data of the Brāhmaṇa literature which is a part of the sacred lore and contributes to the bulk of the literature implied by the term 'Veda'. In the foregoing lines we have shown that some Brs. are earlier such as the A.B., K.B., etc., and some like the S.B. and T.B. are later in origin, judged by their contents and language, matter and manner. Hence there cannot be a uniform data for all the Brs. Scholars like Sāmaśramī, Tilak, Dayānanda Saraswatī etc., who consider 4000 B.C. to be the date of the ṚK. Saṁhitā, have fixed up the upper limit of the age of the Brs. as 2500 B. C. and lower limit as 1000 B.C. Again, in the opinion of Western Indologists such as Winternitz, Keith, Bloomfield etc., the origin and development of the Brs. cover the period from 1500 B.C. to 800 B.C. approximately. It is difficult and impossible, rather, in the language of Winternitz, 'it is foolish' to ascertain a definite date for both the Saṁhita period and the Br. period of the Veda. In the age of the A.V. the Aryans have moved eastward from the Indus valley and in the age of the Y. V. and

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[23] History of Indian Literature, Vol. I, page 310.
[24] The Orion, chapter VIII, page 220.

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the Brs. they have moved further in the eastern direction in the Gangetic plain and for the first time the names of new tribes and territories such as the Kurus, Pañcālas, Kāśīs, Koalas, Videhas etc., are met with. This fact has been clearly stated with textual references under the 'Historical and Geographical background' in Book I of this work. On the date of the Brs. Winternitz makes the following observation supported by cogent arguments. 'If we ask in which period we are to locate these centuries of the development of the Br. literature, there can be little question of any definite dates as there is in determining the period of the Saṃhitās. The only certainty is, that the Saṃhitā of the Ṛgveda was already concluded and that the hymn poetry already belonged to a far distant past, when prayers and sacrifices were first made the subject of a special 'science'. It is probably certain, too, that the great majority of magic incantations, spells and formulae of the Atharva-veda, and of the Yajurveda, as well as the melodies of the Sāma-veda, are much older than the speculations of the Brs. On the other hand it is likely that the final compilation of the Saṃhitās of the Atharvaveda and of the liturgical Saṃhitās was contemporaneous with the beginnings of the Br. literature, so that the latest portions of these Saṃhitās might be of the same date as the earliest portions of the Brs. At least the geographical and cultural conditions indicate this, as they are represented to us on the one hand in the Saṃhitās of the A. V. and the Y. V., and on the other hand in the Brs. in comparison with those of the Ṛgveda' [25].

The subject matter of the thesis is 'Indian Civilisation as revealed in the A. B., K. B., S. B., and the T. B.' in particular and all the Brs. in general. There are some extant works on one or other aspect of the vedic civilization covering the whole period from the RK.-Saṃhitā down to the Upaniṣads, i.e., to say both the early vedic and the later vedic age. There is no work dealing exclusively with the Indian civilization as recorded in the Brs. alone. This thesis is a systematic and comprehensive treatment of the different aspects of the civilization of the Brāhmaṇa period of the Vedic era. The work attempts to deal with all

The Plan of the work.

[25] History of Indian Literature, Vol. I, Page 195.

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the major aspects denoted by the term civilization, viz. social, economic, political, military, religious, philosophical and miscellaneous. Such topics as the Flora and the Fauna, calender, astronomy, the language and literature of the Brs., observations of the Brs. on speech and different types of literature, crimes and ordeals etc., which have no logical connection or homogeneity have been discussed in the book captioned "Miscelleneous". The findings and observations in each case have been borne out by relevant quotations from original sources at every point. The quotations in original have been given in the foot-notes and the translations thereof in the body of the work. The thesis has been divided into four books dealing with the Social & Economic Aspect, Political & Military Aspect, Religio-Philosophical Aspect and the Miscellaneous respectively. A summary of each aspect has been appended at the end of each book giving a digest of the aspect in question and showing the relation of the Brāhmaṇical civilisation with that of the Saṃhitā period on the one hand and of the Upaniṣadic era on the other. Thus the summary contains a brief survey of the origin and development of the different aspects of the Brāhmaṇical civilization along with their indebtedness to and difference from those of the early Vedic age as well as their influence on and their divergence from those of the age of the Upaniṣads. The critical analysis of each Book along with the conclusion is given in the summary of the book and need not be repeated in the introduction. Now we shall give a succinct gist of each book in the following lines.

BOOK I

Book I—deals with the social aspect. The book opens with a sketch of the historical and geographical background of the later vedic age. The centre of gravity of the Aryan civilization has shifted from the Indus Valley to the eastern direction i.e., the Gangetic plain. New tribes and territories unheard of in the early vedic era are met with for the first time, e.g., the Kuru-Pañcālas, kosala, videha, kāśi, Uśīnara, Vasa, Uttarakuru, Uttaramadra, Vidarbha, Magadha etc. The west recedes into the background ; the central and eastern territories come into the lime-

Gist of Book I.

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light. Very low castes, mixed castes and out-castes such as Śabara, Andhra, Puṇḍra, Pulinda, Mūtiba, Nīcya, Apācya, Niṣāda, Bainda, Kaivarta, Mārgāra (huntsman), Kirāta, Jambhaka, Paulkasa, Caṇḍāla etc., are met with for the first time in the Brs. and the V. S. which is contemporaneous with the early Brs. Of the four main castes the Brāhmaṇa and the Kṣatriya are superior to the Vaiśya, while all the higher three classes are superior to the Śūdra. The real power of the state rests with the military class or nobles. The priestly class is made up of Brāhmaṇas. In the bid for social ascendancy there is keen competition between the ruling class and the priestly class ; again, there also exists close co-operation between these two classes to maintain the balance of power and to keep under subjection the Vaiśya and the Śūdra classes. The kings are temporal lords whereas the Brāhmiṇs are spiritual lords. Every king has his royal chaplain or family priest whose function is that of a prime minister who advises the king on socio-political matters and acts as a mediator between the ruler and the ruled. The Vaiśyas are the tenants whereas the nobles are the landlords. The king is the owner of all lands. The non-Aryan tribes generally known as the Dasyus who submitted to the hegemony of the Aryans go to the making of the Śūdra community. The Śūdras are the serfs and serve the upper classes. The Vaiśya can be evicted from the land at the sweet will of the landlord, and the Śūdra has no right of property or security of life. These two classes have been gradually upgraded so far as their social status is concerned. Intermarriage between higher and lower castes commenced from the Saṃhitā period ; during the age of the Brs. various mixed castes have come into existence due to intermarriage of every possible variety between the four castes. Thus the pattern of society which was simple in the early vedic age has become highly complicated. The state has to provide for the economic solvency of all the castes by allotting new professions to each caste for the smooth running of the social machinery. Thus we come across nearly seventy occupations in the V. S., some of which are earmarked for women. The importance of the lower castes is more and more realised by the higher classes on account of their professions without which society would be at a standstill. Gradually the Vaiśya approximates to the position of nobles, and the Śūdra to the position

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of the humbler freemen. Due to the growing complication of the social structure the relation of simple slavery is abolished. Thus the bulk of the Śūdra community stands in the relationship of serfs. Some mixed castes, for example, the Rathakāras or the chariotwrights, enjoy an esteemed position in society. They are even entitled to place the sacrificial fire like the higher three castes.

Marriage is looked upon as a sacrament and not as a contract. As a rule, chastity and high moral tone obtain in the conjugal life ; stray instances of moral laxity in married life are exceptions that confirm the general moral trend.

Education is compulsory for the upper three castes. There is no reference regarding the education of the Śūdras. There are residential institutions located in sylvan environ run by learned sages. There are also peripatetic teachers called 'Carakas' who move from place to place like mobile schools and offer instructions. Names of learned ladies and spiritually enlightened women are met with but we do not know whether there existed any institution to offer instructions to women. Women are adept in embroidery, knitting, sewing, weaving and dyeing. Fine arts are cultivated. Music, both vocal and instrumental, and dance are widely practised by both the sexes.

Gold and silver ornaments are used by the people. Besides gold and silver mention is also made of brass, copper, iron, lead and tin. A gold currency is met with.

Agriculture is the main occupation. Wheat, paddy and barley are the staple food. Various drinks are in use.

Certain passages prove the existence of maritime trade and large sea-going vessels fitted with hundred oars.

Village life and township are settled facts. From the terms Pūh, Pur, Purī etc., and references to famous capitals like Videha of King Janaka and Kāśī of King Ajātaśatru it may be safely concluded that some towns and cities have assumed definite shape while others were in the making. Public highways and good roads are constructed for easy journey and speedy traffic. The headmen of villages called Grāmaṇīs hold important posts both as civil and military functionaries.

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BOOK II

Monarchy is the prevailing system of govt. The first king in both the heaven and earth is elected but successive kings are not elected. Kingship is hereditary in character and succession by the law of primogeniture is the practice.

Eleven different types of monarchy are heard of. Different grades of monarchy such as kingship, imperialism, paramount sovereignty are connected with different forms of sacrifice that have a political bearing. The extents of the territories of emperors and paramount sovereigns are described in exaggerated terms but, in reality, they are small. Vastly extensive territroies are an imposibility in an age when the vedic Aryans have neither crossed the Vindhya range nor entered Bengal. The states of the later Vedic age markedly differ from those of the early Vedic age in one important respect : In the era of the RK.-Samhitā the states are still tribal : They have no fixed geographical boundary or territorial basis. The early vedic states may be termed floating states having no fixed basis ; but in the later Vedic age the states have become territorial with their geographical boundary clearly defined. In the Brs. we find different tribes settling down in different parts of the country.

Gist of Book II.

The coronation or consecration ceremony of kings is an important function. The multifarious rites connected with this ceremony will be found in the body of this work. Each rite is symbolic representing different functions and prerogatives of the king. The presence of 'King-makers' in this ceremony marks a popular element connected with kingship. The demi-divinity of the king is proved by certain traditional beliefs and rites. He is both the legislative and the executive head. Dharma or Law is regarded as the real sovereign and the earthly king as the executive to uphold and enforce that law. The king seems to be the head of the judiciary and the army as well.

The Brāhmin chaplain of the king functions as his chief adviser in both spiritual and secular matters. He is the main organ of administration and acts as a mediator between the ruler and the ruled. The king and his Purohita smoothly govern the kingdom aided by such important personnel as the village headman, the commander of the army, the tax-collector,

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treasurer, chamberlain, and the two important popular assemblies called the sabhā and the samiti. Some Brāhmin priests of exceptional ability hold the post of administrator of two or even three states jointly. The position of the Purohita is that of a Prime Minister. The village headman called Grāmaṇī is both a civil and military functionary. The two popular assemblies called the sabhā and the samiti form two important administrative organisations. They hark back to hoary antiquity. The sabhā is a select body of aristocrats and is less popular than the samiti which is a more comprehensive body comprising the representatives of both the commoner and nobles. Both these bodies exercise considerable authority and act as a healthy check on the power of the king. The sabhā functions both as a popular body and a court of justice. In the age of the Brs. the samiti is almost obsolete ; casual references to the sabhā only are met with.

The relation between the ruler and the ruled is cordial ; there exists a spirit of co-operation on both sides. The king realises taxes and, in return, protects the life and property of the people. To enlist the sympathy and active co-operation of his subjects in times of war and other national calamities the monarch condescends to come down to the level of the commoner and partake of food from a common plate.

In times of war people place their wives and children in the king's palace for safety. Valuable articles are dropped in, to lakes and seas in such a way that they may be retrieved after the warfare. Various arms and missiles are in use. Four different types of victory are enumerated in the A.B. termed Jiti, Abhijiti, Vijiti and Saṃjiti.

The queens, brothers and sons of kings enjoy an esteemed position. The inclusion of the chief queen in the list of king-makers and the important role she plays in the horse-sacrifice bespeaks her constitutional status. The son of the monarch is the heir-apparent to the throne. The favourite wife of the king called Vāvātā often acts as a go-between the king and his subjects.

The Brs. record cases of dethronement of wicked kings. Instances are also met with where a deposed king has been pardoned and reinstalled on the throne. This fact bespeaks the Vox populi in matters of administration. Instances of such

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malevolent despots are rare in the Vedic age. In the whole range of the vedic literature we come across only two or three instances of dethronement of kings. A close perusal of the Brs. bears testimony to the fact that the state in the later vedic age approximates to the ideals of a welfare state. The state gives protection to citizens from foreign aggressions, maintains internal order by enforcing respect for the traditional law or Dharma.

BOOK III

Book—III—deals with the aspect of religion and philosophy of the Brs. As the philosophy of the Brs. is not highly developed but in the making this aspect has been discussed along with religion in this book called,—'Religio-philosophical Aspect.' The theory of sacrifice, the forms of sacrifice, the origin and development of Priesthood, the spirit underlying the form of sacrifice, emergence of popular religious cults, the influence of non-Aryan religion and primitive faith of the religion of the Brs., sacraments, four orders of life and five great daily sacrifices etc. . . form the major topics of discussion under the portion on religion. The theory of sacrifice partially embodies the cosmogony, theology and the eschatology of the Brs. Sacrifice constitutes the main religious practice during the age of the Brs. The universe comes into being from the first sacrifice performed by the Purusa, the Primal Being. The four vedas, four castes, animals both wild and domestic, the sun and the moon, firmament, fire, air etc. . . . spring from the dismembered limbs of the Purusa who is both the sacrificer and the victim offered therein. Thus the sacrifice is the self-sacrifice of the Creator who becomes many through the sacrifice. The sacrifice achieves the union of the sacrificer with the god. This union admits of three different kinds. The reward of the sacrifice is both worldly and other-worldly. Some sacrifices are obligatory while others are optional. Wish-yielding rituals are optional. Grand-sacrifices such as the Rājasūya, Vājapeya, and Aśvamedha are connected with the coronation, imperialism and peramount sovereignty of rulers. The horses-race and chariot-race connected with some of the grand sacrifices along with

Gist of Book III.

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instrumental music present the picture of an Olympic sport and national festivity as well, which influence the common people whereas the cultured mind alone feels the spiritual influence of sacrifice.

The correctness of rituals and procedure is strictly enjoined and any omission or commission brings severe repercussion on the priests and even on the gods. Sacrifice proper has nothing to do with magic or the black art of necromancy.

The priests play the most important role in the performance of sacrifices. There are sixteen priests in all, four Rgvedic priests, four Yajurvedic priests, four Sāma-vedic and four Brahmans or superintending priests who are versed in all the three vedas. The priests are held in high esteem and exert considerable influence on the ruler and the ruled. The sacrificer (according to some, the priest called Sadasya) is regarded as the seventeenth priest.

The spirit underlying the form of sacrifice is never lost sight of though the form is made much of. The spirit of reverence, adherence to truth and knowledge are enjoined to obtain the real benefit of rituals. In the S.B. and the T.B., the later Brs., great stress is laid on the spirit of the sacrifice and the path of knowledge.

Popular religious cults like the Viṣṇu-cult, Rudra-Śiva-cult etc. . . evolve and assume definite shape during this age. Rudra the terrific god of the R.V. ultimately becomes Śiva in the Y.V., S.B. and the T.B. The beginnings of the cult of Bhakti or devotion are traced in these popular religious cults and the germ of image-worship is found in the image of the gold-man representing the gods Prajapati (Creator) and Agni (Fire) placed inside the mystic Fire-altar. The conception of Rudra-Śiva forms an interesting study of an attempt at synthesising the thesis and anti-thesis of the social structure.

The influence of non-Aryan religion and primitive faith may be detected in certain sacrificial practices connected with the horse-sacrifice, Mahavrata, Gosava etc. The Rudra-cult belongs to hoary antiquity and was prevalent among non-Aryan tribes.

The sacraments detailed in the Brs. relate particularly to the natal rites, investiture with the holy thread, marriage and the disposal of the dead. Of the four orders of life two orders

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only, viz, those of the householder and the student-life are explicitly stated while the Vānaprastha and the ascetic order are only faintly hinted at ; these two orders termed Vānaprastha and Sannyāsa take definite shape and gain in importance in the age of the Āraṇyakas and Upaniṣads.

The portion dealing with the philosophical aspect in Book III includes the cosmogony, theology, ethics and eschatology of the Brs. The cosmogony of the Brs. is mixed up with legends and explanations of sacrificial rituals. The creation of the universe is ascribed to different causes such as the ascrifice, the penance of the Primal Being, cosmic waters, space (Ākaśa), the Cosmic Mind etc. The S. B. mentions Brahman (neuter), the Absolute Spirit as the final cause of creation. Brahman is identified with Atman which is also mentioned as the source of creation. Names and forms are regardad as the warp and woof wherewith the creator weaves the texture of the universe.

The theology of the Brs. includes both personal gods and the impersonal Absolute Godhead. The early Brs. like the A.B., the K.B., etc., do not refer to the impersonal unqualified Supreme Spirit but the later Brs. like the S.B. and T.B. mention the impersonal Godhead in clear and unmistakable terms. The personal gods are described in terms of anthropomorphism ; they represent different elements of Nature which are deified ; all the gods are identified with the Sun-god, each deity representing one or other aspect of the Sun. Later on the gods are regarded as the diverse manifestations of one central Supreme Godhead. The charge that the Impersonal Absolute Godhead is not met with in the Brs. falls to the ground because the S.B. and the T.B. distinctly mention the Supreme Spirit which is impersonal and shorn of attributes termed Brahman and identified with Atman and Truth. A graphic description of the characteristics of this Supreme Self, the All-Soul is given in the S.B. In the case of personal gods whenever a god is invoked and propitiated he is worshipped as the Supreme God ; this fact bespeaks the monotheistic character of the Vedic pantheon. The Impersonal Absolute, the Supreme Spirit is the fountainhead of all existence, all names and forms.

The eschatology of the Brs. deals with the problems of life hereafter, 'the great beyond', heaven and hell, and the final emancipation from the worldly bondage. On expiry men

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attain the heavenly world and achieve union with the personal gods. This union admits of three different kinds called Sālokya, Sārupya and Sāyujya. This heavenly life is not everlasting; it is commensurate with the term of piety which enables the sacrificer to attain heaven. On termination of his piety he is reborn on earth. Thus his death here means birth hereafter, and death hereafter means birth here. The departed soul is weighed in a balance and is consigned to the joys of the paradise or damnations of the hell according to the indications of the scale. The Zend Avesta also mentions this scale and similar judgment on the departed soul. The S.B. and the J.B. present us with a graphic picture of the idyllic blissful atmosphere of the paradise as also of the gruesome harrowings of the hell. These descriptions anticipate the detailed descriptions of the heaven and the purgatory we come across in the Pūraṇas and the Korān. The Brs. clearly state the doctrine of the transmigration of Soul and metempsychosis. Those who realise the Absolute Godhead Brahman through knowledge, par excellence, are wholly absorbed in the All-Soul attaining final emancipation from mundane thraldom. They elude the clutches of death and birth forever. Thus the Upaniṣadic doctrine of Mokṣa or final liberation of the individual soul is anticipated in the Brs. The eschatology of the Brs. is far more developed them that of the Saṃhitās and foreshadows the eschatology of the Upaniṣads.

BOOK IV

The fourth book termed 'Miscellaneous' is a medley of heterodox topics having no homogeneity or logical connection and comprises the flora and the fauna, calendar, astronomy, crimes and ordeals, the language and literature of the Brs., observations of the Brs. on speech and language, and the different types of literature referred to by the Brs. The chapter on flora and fauna enumerates the various plants, trees, herbs, flowers, domestic animals, wild beasts, birds and insects mentioned in the different Brs. The sanskrit names of the plants have been given with their botanical nomenclature. The chapter on the then Aryan calendar forms an interesting study. The astounding

Gist of Book IV.

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knowledge of the solar science of the vedic Aryans merits great importance. We are taken aback by their discovery of the great astronomical truth that the sun does not move ; its apparent motion being illusory, that the sun never rises or sets, it is shining perenially in the firmament and the days and nights are caused by the rotation of the earth. The A. B., K. B and C. B. record this correct scientific observation of the Vedic fathers in clear and lucid language. The time-schedule of sessional sacrifices like the Gavamayana etc., preserves the system of ancient calendar in an ingenuous manner.

Many grammarians and philologists have written on the linguistic phenomena of the Brs. noting the peculiarities of the syntax. Some observations on the linguistics of the Brs. have been recorded in Book IV but greater stress has been laid on the observations of the Brs. on speech, language, the relation between mind and speech, varieties of speech, articulate and inarticulate speech etc. The different types of literature referred to in the Brs. bespeak richness and variety, and mark the beginnings of many literary forms. The Brs. mention the three vedas (Trayī Vidyā), Gāthā, Anuśāsana, Vidyā, Vākovākyam, Itihāsa-pūraṇa, Anvākhyāna and accessories to the Vedic study as different forms of literature. Debating bouts are a common feature of the later vedic age. Debating has grown into a regular art. The Vākovākyam is the precursor of Indian logic. Many maxims lie scattered like gems in the Br. texts and the beautiful allegorical anecdotes mark the beginnings of Morality Plays and allegorical drama. Many legends and myths of the Puranas and tradition trace their origin in those of the Brs. Fables and didactic stories are also found.

Varieties of crimes and ordeals we come across in the Brs. have been enumerated under 'Crimes and Ordeals'.

The succinct gist of each book given above is virtually a synopsis of the analytical summary of each aspect appended at the end of each book. Hence some repetitions are unavoidable. The summary contains the dtailed and critical analysis of the main tendencies, and characteristics of each book along with the conclusions arrived at whereas the gist embodied in the introduction presents a bare outline of the main features of each book. Hence for proper evaluation of each book the summary given towards the close of each book is all important.

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The summories of the books concerned are to be found in the pages mentioned against each book :—

The summary of Book I,—vide pages	79	to	83
,, ,, ,, Book II,—vide pages	131	to	136
,, ,, ,, Book III,—vide pages	245	to	251
,, ,, ,, Book IV,—vide pages	286	to	287

Originality Claimed :

The complete or over-all picture of the whole work is given in a nutshell in the following lines. The work attempts to evaluate the civilisation of Brahmanic era from all aspects,—social, economic, political, religious, philosophical, linguistic, literary etc. The treatment is comprehensive and both analytic and synthetic in character. In the discussion and critical evaluation of each aspect the points of similarity and departure of the Brāhmaṇic era with reference to the early Vedic era on the one hand and the Upaniṣadic era on the other have been enumerated. From the social aspect it was a transition from the clan-life to class-life, from simple social structure to complicated structure, from agriculture and basic cottage industry to multifarious occupations and industries mentioned under 'Occupations and Industries' in Book I. The clan-life developed into family life which, in its turn, culminated in the class-life or caste system. It was a march from unsettled life to settled life. The emregence of new castes, mixed castes and the impact of non-Aryans gave rise to new social problems. Politically this era was a march from clan-chieftancy to monarchy, from simple kingship to grades of monarchy, from the floating tribal states of the early Vedic age to established states with territorial basis. The Brāhmaṇas enjoyed a supreme position in the field of both politics and religion. They had a equal hold on the ruler and the ruled. Towards the last phase of the Brāhmaṇic age the priestly power

Comprehensive treatment and Critical Evaluation.

The Over-all Picture.

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was fast declining in diplomatic as well as spiritual affairs. Sacrifice began to lose its importance and new popular religious cults such as the Viṣṇu cult, Rudra-Śiva-cult etc., came into existence. Some non-Aryan practices and primitive religion were adopted and re-oriented by the Aryans. A cultural synthesis was in the making. The Brs. mark the beginnings of Bhakti-cult, popular religious cults and image-worship. In the Upaniṣadic age sacrifice was denounced and Kṣatriyas gained in importance in both political, spiritual and academic spheres. Thus the political and religious picture of the Brāhmaṇic age is much more developed and is a far cry from that of the early Vedic age. From the standpoint of philosophy this period is a transition from the personal gods to the Impersonal Absolute Godhead, from the attainment of heaven to the attainment of supreme Godhead, from the basic conception of the next-world to the transmigration of the soul and metempsychosis, frof the path of action to the path of knowledge. These philosophical problems reached their culmination in the Upaniṣadic age. The Brs. mark the beginnings of several philosophical systems such as Vedānta, Sāṅkhya, Nyāya and Pūrva-mīmāṃsā. From the perspective of language and literature also, the Brs. represent the period of transition from the early Vedic literature to the Upanisadic literature. The observations of the Brs. on speech and the multifarious and varied literary forms recorded in the Brs. offer a rich field of research in linguistics and history of literary forms. Thus from all aspects and all angles of vision the civilisation revealed in the Brs. marks a period of transition from the early Vedic to the Upaniṣadic civilisation, and as such the Brahmanic age may be termed a halfway house between the Samhita period and the Upanisadic age. For an exhaustive treatment of this over-all picture *vide* the conclusion of the whole work entitled 'Conclusion' given at the end of the work (*vide* Pages 378 to 382).

Novel angle of vision and mode of presentation.

Originality is claimed in the mode of treatment, the way of critical evaluation and presentation, embodied under 'Conclusion', the last topic of the thesis. Besides this original way in evaluation and presentation of each aspect and the work as a whole, originality may be claimed for the following topics

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discussed in the Book, viz., the relation between the castes, women and marriage, Dress and Decorations, The relation between the Ruler and the Ruled, The Royal Family, various practices and conventions during warfare etc. In Book III the two important items of discussion entitled 'The Spirit underlying the form of Sacrifice' and 'Emergence of Popular Religious Cults' and the dialectic process involved in the evolution of Rudra-Śiva-cult may be claimed as original. Similar claim may be made for the topics captioned 'Eschatology', 'The Theory of Sacrifice' and 'Theology' in Book III and The Flora and Fauna, Calendar, Ovservations of the Brs. on speech and Types of literature referred to in the Brs. in Book IV.

Individual topics claimed as original.

In passing it may be noted that as the V. S. is contemporaneous with the Brs. and as the discussion of certain topics remains incomplete without taking into account the V. S. we have referred to this Saṁhitā while dealing with the topics of 'Occupations and Industries' and 'Emergence of popular religious cults'.

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Book I

THE SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC ASPECT

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BOOK I

CHAPTER I

THE SOCIAL & ECONOMIC ASPECT

GEOGRAPHICAL & HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Centre of gravity of Aryan civilisation shifted towards the Gangetic plain.

The centre of gravity of Aryan Civilisation was shifting from the North-West to the eastern regions in the later Vedic age. In the Ṛgvedic age the cradle-land of Aryan civilisation was located in the land of the traditional Pañca-janas in the Punjab and extended eastward to the region bordered by the rivers Sarasvatī and Dṛṣadvatī, the home of Bharatas. In the Brāhmaṇical era the civilisation shifted from the Indus valley to the Gangetic plain ; Aryan civilisation is a definite thing in the more eastern regions in that age with Kurukṣetra as its centre bounded on the north by Turghna, on the south by the Khāndava, and on the west by Parīṇah. S.B. (1-6-3-11) refers to the eastern and western oceans. The Himālayas and the Tṛkakud (three-peaked) mountain nestled amidst the Himalayan range are mentioned in the T.A. So far as the rivers are concerned the far-famed holy river Sarasvatī of the Ṛgvedic age which is invoked as the greatest among rivers (Naditame), the greatest among mothers (Ambitame) and the greatest of goddesses (Devitame) in the R.V.[1] faded into insignificance and lost her former glory in the Brahmanical era. In the tenth Maṇḍala of the R.V. the name of the Ganges is met with along with other rivers such as Yamunā, Sarasvatī, etc.[2]

Names of new rivers.

In the earlier Maṇḍalas the name of the Ganges is never heard ; this fact proves that the river Sarasvatī gradually receded into the background and the rivers of the Gangetic plain came into prominence during the later vedic age. The rivers of the eastern

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1. R.V. 2-41-16, 'Ambitame naditame devitame Sarasvatī'.
2. 10-75-5,—Imaṃ me gange yamune sarasvatī.....suṣomayā'.

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region became prominent in this period. The S.B. mentions the river Sadānīrā as the boundary line between the Kosalas and Videhas.[3] Weber and Eggeling identify this river with Gaṇḍak ; Pargiter identifies it with Rāpti. The Vedic Index (II, pp. 422) lends support to the identification of Sadānīrā with Gaṇḍak. The name Sadānīrā is very significant ; it seems this river never ran dry.

New regions and tribes.

The Brāhmaṇas mention various new places and tribes. Paricakra mentioned in S.B. 13-5-4-7 has been identified with the later Ekacakra which was near Kāmpīla. Āsandivat is mentioned as the capital of king Janamejaya, son of Parikṣit, located in Kurukṣetra. Some indologists identify it with Hastināpur. The town of Kāmpīla met with in the S.B. has been identified with modern Kampil on the old Ganges between Badaun and Farrukhavad.

Three broad divisions of the country.

The country was divided into three broad regions,—Brahmāvarta or Āryāvarta, Madhyadeśa and Dakṣiṇāpatha. The A.B. (8-38-3)[4] mentions five divisions or regions of the country according to four directions and the central region viz., the eastern region, southern region, western, northern and central part called Prācya, Dakṣiṇa, Pratīcya, Udīcya and Madhyadeśa respectively. Besides these five the upper direction or Ūrdhā dik has been mentioned as the abode of gods. This passage of the A.B. also mentions the different tribes residing in those five regions and the particular type of sovereignty obtaining in each region. The Kings of the eastern region were called Samrāt and the type of sovereignty obtaining in that part was called Sāmrājya. The Satvat people resided in the southern direction and their king was termed 'Bhoja' ; thus suzerainty over the southern region came to be known as Bhaujya. Outcasts and castes of the lower order used to reside in the western region and their rulers were called 'Svarāt' as the type

Different types of Sovereignty.

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3. 1-4-1-17, 'Saiṣā (Sadānīrā) apyetahi kosala-videhānāṃ maryādā.'

4. 8-38-3,—'Athainaṃ prācyāṃ diśi.....sa parameṣṭhī-prājāpatyo bhavat'.

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of kingship prevailing there was termed Svārājya. To the north beyond the Himalayan belt lay the states of Uttara-Kuru and Uttara-Madra ; the king of those states was designated Virāj as the type of monarchy obtaining in that region was called Vairājya. In the central part or Madhyadeśa which was firmly established (Dhruvapratiṣṭhita) resided the Vaśas, Uśīnaras and Kuru-pañcālas whose kings were designated Rājā as the system of monarchy obtaining in those regions was called Rājya. These different types of monarchy and their import will be discussed in Book II.[5] Thus this striking passage of the A.B. is all important as it gives us an inkling into the divisions of the country, names of different regions and tribes, and the types of monarchy prevailing in each region. From this account we can form an idea of the regions where Aryan civilisation infiltrated during the Brāhmaṇical age.

Various tribes mentioned in the ṚK-Saṃhitā underwent considerable changes in the Brāhmaṇical age. Some of the old tribes paled into insignificance, some disappeared wholly while new tribes emerged and came into prominence. The five principal tribes of the Saṃhitā period viz., the Anus, Druhyus, Purus, Turvasus, Yadus were no longer heard of. They receded into the background giving place to new formations and amalgamations of tribes of which the Kurus along with their allies the Pañcālas stood out pre-eminently. The Bharatas of the early vedic age also lost their prominence but lived in their memorable deeds. The Br. texts recount the glorious deeds of such Bharata Kings as Bharata Dauḥṣanti, Śatānīka Satrājita etc. The central region called Madhyadeśa was occupied by the Kurus and the Pañcālas, Vaśas and Uśīnaras. The R.V. does not mention the Kurus as a tribe. Though the Kurus are not directly mentioned in the R.V., a king called 'Kuru-śravaṇa' 'glory of the Kurus' and a patron Kaurayāṇa are referred to in the hymns of the R.V. According to S.B. (13-5-4-7) the Pañcālas were called 'Krivi' in the early Vedic age and a tribe of this name is referred

Kuru-Pañcālas.

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5. The Political Aspect.

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to in the R.V. (7-20-24) in connection with the rivers Sindhu and Asikni. 'The Kuru Kingdom', in the words of Dr. A. D. Pusalkar, 'roughly corresponded to the modern Thaneswar, Delhi and the Upper Gangetic Doab'.[6] The two tribes Kurus and Pañcālas were close allies and the name of the Pañcāla never occurs alone minus the Kurus. The names of the two States always recur jointly as if the two formed a united nation, a composite state. The A.V. states that the Kuru Kingdom flourished during the reign of king Parikṣit.[7] The Pañcāla Kings Kraivya and Śoṇa Sātrāsāha are spoken of as having performed the Āśvamedha and king Durmukha is eulogised as the conqueror of the whole earth.[8] The Br. texts sing the glory of these two states Kuru-Pañcālas and their residents. The two states are spoken of as model states and the peoples as ideal citizens. They were the best representatives of Vedic culture, example of ideal conduct and polished manners, speakers of flawless Sanskrit ; their mode of sacrifice was perfect and their Kings were ideal rulers. They had the best scholars, teachers and debators, best academician, and the Brahmins of those states were looked upon as the very model to which others should approximate. The purity and perfection of speech of the Kuru-Pañcālas has been praised in many of the Brs. Observes the S.B.—'Pure speech (Pathyā Svasti) discerned the northern direction ; hence the peoples of Kuru-Pañcālas speak the pure language'.[9] 'Pure speech discerned the northern direction', says the K.B.'[10] The Kuru-Pañcāla Brahmins acquired fame and celebrity and their way of life was commended. The verse of A.V. quoted above is corroborated by S.B. 13-5-4-2 which states that these two allied states reached

Wide celebrity of Kuru-Pañcāla States.

Purity of speech in the Kuru-Pañcālas.

6. Vedic Age, Page 253.

7. 20-127-7, 8, 9,—'Rājño viśva-janīnasya.....Janaḥ Sa bhadramedhate raṣṭre rājñaḥ Parikṣitaḥ'.

8. A.B. 8-39-9,—'Durmukhaḥ Pañcālo rājā san vidyayā samantaṃ sarvataḥ pṛthivīṃ jayan parīyāya'.

9. 3-2-3-15, 'Udīcīmeva diśam. Pathyayā Svastyā prājānaṃ stasmādatrottarā hi vāg vadati Kurupañcālatrā'.

10. 7-6,—'Sā (Pathyā Svasti) Udīcīm diśaṃ prājānāt'. Pathyā svasti means Vāk or speech. Vide S.B. 3-2-3-8 ; 4-5-1-4 and K.B. 7-6,—'Vāg vai Pathyā Svastiḥ'.

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their height of glory under Parikṣit and Janamejaya, whose capital was Āsandivant with two other towns, Maṣṇāra and Kāroti. Maṣṇāra is mentioned in A.B. 8-5-4 and Kāroti in S.B. 9-5-2-15.

Sṛñjayas & Tṛṣtus.

Just as the Kurus were close allies of the Pañcālas, the Sṛñjayas were also close allies of the Tṛṣtus and they are described as such in the ṚK Saṃhitā. The S.B. bears testimony to the fact that these two states were ruled over by one ruler and one Purohita or Chief Minister—called Devabhāga Śrautarṣa.[11]

Matsyas & Vaśas.

The people called Matsyas appear jointly with the Vaśas. S.B. (13-5-4-9) records the performance of the horse-sacrifice by their King Dhvasan Dvaitavana at the lake Dvaitavana. The A.B. locates the Vaśas in the Madhyadeśa along with the Kurus, the Pañcālas and the Uśīnaras. The G.B. speaks of the Vaśas and the Uśīnaras as united peoples. The K.U. tags the name of Matsyas to the Vaśas and Uśīnaras.

Śibis.

From the A.B. (8-39-9) we know of the tribe called Śibis and their King Śaibya Śuṣmiṇa who defeated and killed King Atyarāti Jānantapi.[12] The Śibis had as their ally the Uśīnaras ; they inhabited the Shorkot region in Jhang in the Punjab lying between the rivers Irāvatī and Candrabhāgā.

Śalvas.

Another tribe of people called Śalvas are met with in the S.B. (10-4-1-10) and according to Dr. Pusalkar 'they occupied probably what is now the modern Alwār State.'[13]

Kosala and Videha.

The Saṃhitā literature does not mention the Kosala and Videha. We come across the names of these two states in the S.B. (1-4-1-10) which states in clear and unambiguous terms the shifting of the centre of gravity of the Aryan civilisation from the west to the east. The Aryan civilisation so long

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11. 2-4-4-5, 'Devabhāgaḥ Śrautarṣaḥ sa ubhayeṣām kurūṇāṃ ca Sṛñjayānāṃ ca purohita āsa'.

12. 'Atyarātiṃ Jānantapimāttavīryaṃ niḥśukram amitratāpanaḥ Śuṣmiṇaḥ Śaibyo rājā jaghāna'. The term 'Śaibya' has been explained by Sāyaṇa as Śibiputra, 'son of Śibi', whereas some scholars explain it as belonging to the Śibi tribe.

13. Vedic age—Page 254.

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nestled and nurtured in the Indus valley or the Suvāstu region sanctified by the waters of the holy Sarasvatī shifted towards the Gangetic plain, crossed the river Sadānīrā, the eastern boundary of Gaṇḍak and reached the land of Videha. Videgha Māthava the King of the Videha along with his priest Gotama Rāhūgaṇa is described as carrying the sacred sacrificial fire eastward from the banks of the Sarasvatī over Kosala (Oudh) across the river Sadānīrā and finally settling at Videha (Tirhut) after the tribal name of Māthava.[14] This memorable passage of the S.B. proves categorically that the Videhas received their culture from the west, that Kosala was Aryanised before Videha and that the territory bordered by the river Sadānīrā was conquered by the Vedic Aryans, that Aryan settlement was an established fact in that region.

Infiltration of Aryan culture in eastern India.

Besides the Kuru-Pañcāla three other states gained celebrity and became seats of Aryan culture during this period, viz.,—Kosala, Videha and Kāśī, which sometimes formed a confederacy. S.S.S. (16-9-11) mentions King Para, son of Āṭṇāra as a ruler of both Kosala and Videha ; the same text (16-29-5) also testifies to the fact that the three states Kāśī, Kosala and Videha sometimes had the same royal chaplain or priest Jāla Jātū-Karṇya as their administrator.[15] This observation of the S.S.S. at once proves the close alliance among the three states and the exceptional administrative ability of the priest concerned. The S.B. speaks of the Kosala King Para-Āṭṇāra Hairaṇyanābha to have performed the horse sacrifice.[16] In the Upanisadic era we find two renowned kings of immortal name reigning in two of these states viz.—King Ajātaśatru in Kāśī and the Saint King Janaka of hallowed memory in Videha who were the leaders of Aryan thought and culture and great patrons of learning. In the age of the

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14. S.B. 1-4-1-10,—'Videgho ha Māthavo' gniṃ vaiśvānaraṃ mukhe babhāra. Tasya Gotamo Rāhūgaṇa ṛṣiḥ Purohita āsa.'

S.B. 1-4-1-14,—'Videgho Māthava āsa. Sarasvatyāṃ sa..... Sadānīretyuttarād girernirdhāvati tāṃ haiva nātidadāha.'

15. S.S.S. 16-29-5,—'Jālo Jātūkarṇyaḥ.....trāyānāṃ rājyaṃ.... p:āpa.kāśya-vaidehayoḥ purohito babhūva, Kausalyasya ca rājñaḥ'.

16. 13-5-4-4,—'Āṭṇārasya paraḥ putro' śvaṃ medhyamavandhayat. Hairaṇyanābhaḥ Kausalyaḥ'.

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Brs. there existed a spirit of rivalry between the Kosala-Videhas and Kuru-Pañcālas. Kosala lay to the north-west of the Ganges and corresponded to the modern Oudh. Videha may roughly be identified with modern Tirhut, and Kāśī with Banaras.

S.B. (13-5-4-22) records the defeat of Dhṛtarāṣtra, King of Kāśīs at the hands of the Bharata King Śatānīka Satrājita. The latter seized the white sacrificial horse of the former.

Magadha.

The Magadhas are also heard of for the first time in the later Vedic literature but they could not attain celebrity like the Kuru-Pañcālas or Kosala-Videhas. The Magadha country is identified with the Southern part of Bihar.

Vidarbha.

The territory of Vidarbha is mentioned in A.B. (7-34) ; one of the Kings of Vidarbha was Bhima who met the sages Parvata and Nārada to enlighten himself regarding the substitute of the creeper Soma.

The name of Vanga is not met with in the Brs. It occurs for the first time in the A.A. 2-1-1.

Satvants.

The people called Satvants inhabited a territory located in the Southern part of India and were the subjects of Bhoja King. The territory of the Bharatas was contiguous to the state of Satvants and the former used to make sudden forays on the latter. S.B. (13-5-4-21) narrates the defeat of the Satvants at the hands of king Bharata who seized their sacrificial horse.

Nīcyas & Apācyas.

According to the testinomy of the A.B. such tribes as Nīcyas and Apācyas were termed Pratīcyas or westerners as they belonged to western India. Another tribe called Ambaṣṭhas mentioned in A.B. (8-21) belonged to Punjab.

Udīcyas.

The Udīcyas or northerners comprised the Uttarakurus, Uttaramadras, Mūjavants, Bāhlikas, Keśins, Kekayas and Kambojas. The north as already stated above was celebrated for scholarship, proficiency in debates and chaste speech. The twice-born people in general and the Brāhmaṇas in particular went to the north for study. The Uttaramadra was located beyond the Himālayas to the north. The epithet Uttara or northern is attached to it to distinguish it from the Southern Madra territory or Madras proper.

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The Southern Madra or Madras does not appear in the Vedic literature. Some scholars like Prof. Zimmer etc., have identified the Uttarakuru, Uttaramadra territory with Kashmir.

Uttarakuru and Uttaramadra.

'It is reasonable to accept Zimmer's view that the northern Kurus were settled in Kashmir, especially as Kurukṣetra is the region where tribes advancing from Kashmir might naturally be found. Uttaramadra is the name of a tribe mentioned with the Uttarakurus in the A.B. as living beyond the Himālayas. Zimmer points out that in the Vaṃśa Br. Kamboja Aupamanyava is a pupil of Madragāra, and thence infers that Kambojas and Madras were not far distant in space. This conclusion is perfectly reasonable in view of the probable position of the Kambojas' (Vedic Index, Vol. I, page 84). The S.B. (10-6-1-2) mentions Aśvapati, a king of the Kekayas, an erudite scholar who offered instruction to a number of Brāhmaṇas. The Kekayas settled down in the tract of land bordered by the rivers Sindhu and Vitastā in north-western India.

Gāndhāra.

The territory of Gāndhāra was included within the region of the Aryans in the Vedic age which was an important centre of learning. As recorded in the A.B. (7-34) Nagnajit, a reputed teacher of the later Vedic period who preached the Soma-cult was one of the kings of Gāndhāra.

States became territorial in the later Vedic age.

From the above discussion it is clear that the state in the later Vedic age was different from that of the early Vedic age. In the early Vedic age, in the era of the ṚK Saṃhitā the state was still tribal. The Bharatas, the Yadus, Anus, Druhyus, Turvasus etc., mentioned in the Saṃhitā had no fixed geographical boundary or territorial basis for their states. Those states may be termed floating states having no fixed basis. The Chiefs moved about with the peoples of their tribes and had thus only a tribal basis without fixed topography. But in the later Vedic age the states became territorial with their geographical boundary clearly defined. In the Br. texts we find different tribes settling down in the different parts of the country. The scanty evidence met with in the Brs. does not throw any light on the successive stages through which the floating states assumed the territorial shape.

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CHAPTER II

THE CASTE-SYSTEM AND THE RELATION BETWEEN THE FOUR CASTES

In the Ṛg-Veda four castes are mentioned in the Puruṣa-sūkta or the Hymn of creation ; there it is said that the Brāhmaṇa sprang from the mouth, the Kṣatriya from the arms, Vaiśya from the thighs and Śūdra from the feet of the Creator.[1] Apart from this hymn, no clear indication of the evolution of caste is found in the Saṃhitās of the Veda. In the fourth maṇḍala of the R.V. two castes, viz., the Brāhmaṇa and the Kṣatriya are mentioned in the Bṛhaspati hymn (4-50-8).

The Brāhmaṇas mention four castes. S.B. 5-5-4-9 clearly states,—'There are four castes Brāhmaṇa, Rājanya, Vaiśya and Śūdra.'[2] The caste-system in the Brāhmanical age was a transition between the laxity of the Saṃhitā period and the rigidity of the post-Vedic age.

Mention of four castes.

We hear of four castes not only among human beings but also among gods. Commenting on A.B. 1-2-3, Sāyaṇācāryya observes —'There are four castes among gods as well. Among them Agni and Bṛhaspati are Brāhmaṇas. Indra, Varuṇa, Soma, Rudra, Parjanya, Yama, etc., are Kṣatriyas. Vasus, Ādityas, Viśve-devāḥ, Maruts etc., are Vaiśyas among the gods. Puṣaṇa is Śūdra.[3] S.B. 14-4-2-23, 24, 25, also state in unmistakable terms this distinction of castes among the gods. The gods that figure in groups, such as Vasus, Rudras, Ādityas, Viśve-devāḥ, are all Vaiśyas.[4] Time and again the Brāhmaṇas mention Indra as Kṣatriya and Bṛhaspati as Brāhmaṇa.

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1. X. 90.

2. Catvāro vai varṇāḥ, brāhmaṇo rājanyo vaiśyaḥ śūdraśca.

3. 'Santi hi deveṣvapi jātiviśeṣāḥ. Agnirbṛhaspatiśca deveṣu brāhmaṇau. kṣatraṃ yāni etāni devatākṣatrāṇi.....tameva Śaudraṃ varṇamasṛjata Puṣaṇam.'

4. 'Yāni etāni devatākṣatrāṇi.....sa viśamasṛjata yāni etāni devajātāni gaṇaśa ākhyāyante vasavo Rudrā Ādityā Viśvedevā Maruta iti.....Puṣaṇam.'

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Not only amongst gods and men but in the animal world and the vegetable kingdom as well this caste distinction is met with. Thus the goat is Brāhmaṇa, the horse is Kṣatriya, and the ass is both Vaiśya and Śūdra.[5] Lions and tigers are called kings of beasts and the eagle is termed king of birds. In the vegetable kingdom Palāśa (Butea monosperma) is Brāhmaṇa[6], and Dūrbā (sacrificial grass) is Kṣatriya.[7] Among the vedic metres even we hear of caste-distinction ; thus Gāyatrī is Brāhmaṇa whereas Triṣṭuv is Kṣatriya.[8]

Castes amongst gods, men, animal world and vegetable kingdom.

The duties of the four Varṇas have been recorded in the Brāhmaṇa texts. A.B. 7-35-3 mentions 'receipt of gifts, drinking of soma, moving at will, smartness and optional submission to the king as the marks of a Brāhmaṇa. The Vaiśya has been described as one who pays tax to another (anyasya valikṛt) is lived on by another (anyasyādyaḥ), and can be oppressed or enslaved at will (yathākāmaṃjeyaḥ)'. The Śūdra is the servant of another (anyasya preṣyaḥ), to be evicted at will (kāmotthāpyaḥ) and to be slain at will (yathākāmavadhyaḥ),[9] that means, the śūdra has no right of property or security of life against the king or the nobility in general. He is to serve the three higher castes. This passage amply proves the helpless position of the Vaiśya community as well. The Vaiṣya enjoyed the right to property or land on condition that he paid the taxes imposed by the ruling class in return of protection by the Kṣatriya. The nobles or Kṣatriyas were the owners of land and the Vaiṣyas were the tenants. The position of a Vaiṣya was much lower in the social scale than that of a Brāhmaṇa or Kṣatriya.

Duties of four castes.

The origin of the caste-system has not been discussed in the Brāhmaṇas. The Puruṣa-Sūkta of Ṛg-Veda, already

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5. A.B. 6-4-4-12 to 6-4-4-15,—'Brahma vā ajaḥ, kṣatraṃ vā aśvaḥ, vaiśyaśca śūdraścānurāsavaḥ'.

6. S.B. 1-1-1-4,—'Brahma vai Palāśaḥ'.

7. A.B. 8-37-4,—'Kṣatraṃ vā etadoṣadhīnaṃ yad dūrvā'.

8. 7-4-5-6,—'Gāyatraśchandasā brāhmaṇaḥ, Tṛṣṭup chandasā Kṣatriyaḥ'.

9. '(Brāhmaṇaḥ) ādāyyāpāyyāvasayī yathā-kāmaprayāpyaḥ (vaiśyaḥ) anyasya valikṛdanyasyādyo yathā-kāma-jeyaḥ'. (Śūdraḥ) anyasya preṣyaḥ kāmotthāpyo yathākāmavadhyaḥ'.

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referred to, contains the sole reference in the saṃhitās to caste. It seems that the four varṇas were four divisions of the people classified according to their callings or professions, and all the four classes taken together made up the organic whole of the social structure ; every varṇa or class was important and indispensable for the functioning of the social body. Thus the Brāhmaṇas were the spiritual guides ; the Kṣatriyas were the temporal rulers entrusted with administration and protection of the people ; the Vaiṣyas looked after trade and agriculture ; and the Śūdras served the upper three classes, attending to their comforts and well-being.

Origin of Varṇas.

ORIGIN OF THE ŚŪDRAS :—

By the time the Brāhmaṇas were revealed the Vedic Aryans had moved towards the Gangetic plain from the Indus Valley. Aryan or Vedic civilisation was moving from the west to the east. Hence names of new Janapadas or cities not mentioned in the Saṃhitās are met with in the Brāhmaṇa texts such as Kuru-Pañcāla, Kosala (Oudh), Videha (North Bihar), Magadha (South Bihar), Anga (East Bihar) etc. The Aryans were also extending towards the South and Vindhya territory which is unheard of in Mantra texts but is referred to in the Brāhmaṇas. While thus proceeding towards the east and the South the Aryans had frequent clashes and skirmishes with the aboriginal tribes who were children of the soil. These tribes were called Dasyu by the Aryans. A careful perusal of the Brāhmaṇas confirms the fact that the stiffest resistance came from the south ; the people of the South wanted to protect their traditional culture against Aryan intrusion. Again and again we hear in the Brāhmaṇas that the Dasyus used to launch attacks and make sudden forays on the Aryans from the South. Those aborignal inhabitants who surrendered to the victors became Dāsas or Śūdras ; their social status was serfdom. Those who did not bend their necks to the Aryan yoke and who offered sturdy resistance were designated Dasyus or robbers by the Vedic Aryans.

Origin of the Śūdras.

Śūdras were originally non-Aryan aboriginal tribes.

Dasyu & Dāsa.

Now we shall examine the social status of the four castes.

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THE STATUS OF THE ŚŪDRA :—

Like the serfs in the feudal system, the Śūdra's status was the lowest in the social hierarchy. He belonged to the lowest rung of the ladder. The hymn of creation (Puruṣa-Sūkta) of the ṚgVeda saṃhitā states that the Śūdra class sprang from the feet of the Creator. Most of the Brāhmaṇa texts do not mention the Śūdra while narrating the legend of the origin of caste. The S.B. 2-1-4-12 mentions the creation of the three higher castes—Brāhmaṇa, Kṣatriya and Vaiśya which is coeval with the creation of the Cosmos.[10] The Śūdra is left out from this list. Again the T.B. 1-2-6-7 states in unambiguous terms that while the Brāhmaṇa sprang from the gods, the Śūdra sprang from the Asuras or demons.[11] The probable assumption stated above that the Śūdras came from the Dasyus or aboriginal tribes is borne out by this passage of the T.B. It is clear from the above discussion that a Śūdra served the other castes and that he could be evicted from the land, dispossessed of his belongings and might even be killed at the will of the master. The Br. texts leave no room for doubt about the degraded or low social status of the śūdra community. The Śūdras definitely belonged to the servile class. The following Br. texts amply testify to the deplorable condition of the śūdras. S.B. 13-6-2-10 identifies the Brāhmaṇa, the Rājanya and the Viś or Vaiśya with the Brahma, Kṣatra and Maruts respectively while the Śūdra is identified with toil.[12] T.B. 2-3-9 debars Śūdras from milking cows for sacrificial purposes. It enjoins, 'A śūdra should not milk (the cow for sacrificial purposes).' The śūdra sprang from non-existence. If the śūdra milks the cow, that milk is unfit to be offered in sacrifice.[13]

Origin of Śūdras.

Low social status of Śūdras.

Śūdras not entitled to take part in sacrifices.

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10. 'Bhūriti Prajāpatiḥ Brahmā ajanayata, bhuva iti kṣatraṃ svariti viśametāvad vā idaṃ sarvaṃ yāvat brahma kṣatraṃ vit sarveṇaivādhīyate'.

11. 'Daivyo vai varṇo brāhmaṇaḥ. Asuryaḥ śūdraḥ'.

12. 'Tapo vai śūdraṃ'.

13. 'Śūdro na duhyāt, asato vā eṣa sambhūto yacchūdraḥ. Ahavireva tadityāhuryacchūdro dogdhīti'.

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S.B. 1-7-1-10 enjoins in unmistakable terms that the milkman of the cow meant for sacrificial milk must be one of the upper three castes while T.B. 3-2-3-9 says that the milkman or the milkmaid must not belong to the Śūdra class. S.B. 3-1-1-10 goes farther and enjoins that the sacrificer (Yajamāna) who attains divine communion after Dīkṣā, initiation or ordination for sacrifice, should not speak with all sorts of people. He may speak with a Brāhmaṇa, Rājanya or Vaiśya because these three castes are entitled to perform sacrifices ; they are yajñiya.[14]

S.B. 3-1-1-9, 10 clearly states that only the higher three castes, Brāhmaṇa, Rājanya and Vaiṣya are eligible to perform sacrifices.[15] The passage quoted above clearly enjoins the sacrificer not to speak with the Śūdra while engaged in performing a sacrifice and proves that śūdras were not eligible to perform sacrifices.

S.B. 3-1-1-9, 10 prohibits the śūdras' entrance into the sacrificial ground or hall known as Prācīnavaṃśa (eastern hall). In the Rājasūya sacrifice the king is sprinkled with holy water by all castes except the Śūdra community. The ways of the Śūdra are often termed non-Aryan. Thus in the A.B., in the famous ancedote of Śunaḥśepa, a Brāhmaṇa father selling his son as a sacrificial offering is stigmatised for his śūdra way or śūdra like behaviour (śaudra-nyāya).[16]

Śūdras looked down upon by the other three castes.

S.B. 14-1-1-31 forbids the performer of Pravargya sacrifice to have contact with the śūdra.[17] Śūdras were not allowed to sit in the line of Brāhmaṇas. Thus in A.B. 2-8-1 we find Brāhmaṇas objecting to a śūdra sitting in their midst.

Again, some Br. passages definitely prove that the śūdra had access to the sacrificial campus in general though his movements were restricted with regard to certain parts of the sacrificial ground.

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14. 'Sa vai na sarveṇaiva saṃvadet.....brāhmaṇena vaiva, rājanyena vā, vaiśyena vā (saṃvadet) ; te hi yajñiyāḥ'.

15. 'Brāhamaṇo vā rājanyo vā vaiśyo vā te hi yajñiyāḥ'.

16. 'Adarśustvā śāsa-hastaṃ na yacchūdreṣvalapsata'.

17. 'Anṛtaṃ strī śūdraḥ śvā kṛṣṇaḥ śakunistani nā prekṣeta'.

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In S.B. 1-1-4-12 we find that four different addresses have been prescribed for four different varṇas in calling the Haviṣkṛt in Soma-sacrifice ; 'Ehi' in the case of a Brāhmaṇa, 'Āgahi' and 'Ādrava' in the case of a Vaiṣya and Rājanya respectively ; and 'Ādhāva' in case of a Śūdra.[18] This passage goes to prove beyond doubt that the śūdra had access to the sacrificial campus.

They had access to the sacrificial campus.

On account of their dubious origin and their low social status, the śūdras are very often referred to as Anāryas or non-Aryans. The term 'Ārya' signified the three higher castes, Brāhmaṇa, Kṣatriya and Vaiṣya. Thus we find in the S.B. 13-2-9-8 the statement (śūdrā yat Āryajārā) *i.e.*, 'a śūdra woman who is the concubine of some male belonging to Ārya class' *i.e.*, one of the three higher castes. This statement demarcates the śūdra from the Aryan. Thus the śūdra community comprises different clans of non-Aryan aboriginal people who submitted to the hegemony of the Aryans.

Origin of Sub-castes.

Un-touchability.

THE STATUS OF THE VAIŚYA :—

In the hierarchy of castes Vaiśyas occupied the third rank ; they are inferior to the Brāhmaṇa and Rājanya only. It is evident from the Br. texts that this community or class comprised the majority of the subjects, that is why the term Viśaḥ meant both subjects and vaiśyas. Commenting on A.B. 1-2-3 Sāyaṇācāryya observes,—'the word viśa may mean subjects in general or the Vaiśya class in particular.[19] The social status of the Vaiśyas was far more exalted and honourable than that of Śūdras. They were entitled to Upanayana or investiture with the holy thread ; hence the word 'Dvija' includes the three higher castes ; Upanayana or investiture is regarded as their second or spiritual birth. They are called Yajñiya as they are eligible to perform sacrifices.

Vaiśyas formed the bulk of the commoner.

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18. 'Tāni ha vā etāni catvāri vāca, ehīti brāhmaṇasya, āgahi ādraveti vaiśyasya ca rājanyavandhośca, ādhāveti śūdrasya'.

19. 'Viśaṃ ityaya śabdaḥ prajāmātravācī vaiśya-jāti-viṣeṣavācī vā'.

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The main calling of the Vaiśya class consisted of trade and agriculture and hence their importance could never be overestimated for the smooth running of the social machinery. A close perusal of the Brāhmaṇas throws ample light on the fact that, notwithstanding concessions and privileges granted to them, there was a constant attempt on the part of Brāhmaṇas and Kṣatriyas to keep down the Vaiśyas so that the latter might not surpass the former two classes in the bid for social ascendancy. The following Brāhmanical passages will bear this out.

They were invested with the holy thread and performed sacrifices.

The passage of the A.B. quoted above under the subheading 'Duties of four castes' states in clear terms that the Vaiśya had to pay taxes, was lived on or exploited by the two higher castes and could be conquered at will. It has also been shown that they were the tenants whereas the Kṣatriyas or nobles were the landlords.

Suppression of Vaiśyas by the upper two classes.

A.B. 2-10-1 states that the Kṣatriya is subservient to the Brāhmaṇa and the Vaiśya is subservient to the Kṣatriya. By a particular rite in a sacrifice the priest 'makes the Kṣatriya subserve Brāhmaṇa and the Vaiśya subserve Kṣatriya'.[20] The political subjection of the Vaiśya to the ruling class or Kṣatriya is time and again mentioned in the Brāhmaṇas. A.B. 8-36-4 observes that the Vaiśya and Śūdra were made followers of or subservient to the Kṣatriya.[21]

The superiority of the Brāhmaṇa and the Kṣatriya to Vaiśya and Śūdra has been proclaimed in innumerable passages. S.B. 6-4-4-13 states,—'The Brāhmaṇa and Kṣatriya never go behind the Vaiśya and Śūdra,.....he thus encloses those two castes (*viz.* Vaiśya and Śūdra) on both sides by the priesthood and the nobility, and make them submissive.'[22]

Again, the two lower Varṇas, Vaiśya and Śūdra, are described as incomplete varṇas whereas Brāhmaṇas and Rājanyas,

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20. 'Brahmaṇi eva tat kṣatramanunijunakti.....kṣatre eva tad viśamanu-nijunakti'.

21. 'Viśaṃ caivāsmai śaudraṃ ca varṇamanuvartmānau kurvanti'. Sāyaṇa comments,—'Vaiśya-śūdra-varṇau kṣatriyasyānugāminau kurvanti'.

22. 'Na kadācana Brāhmanaśca kṣatriyaśca vaiśyaṃ śūdraṃ ca paścadanvitaḥ.....atha brahmaṇā caivaitat kṣatreṇa caitau varṇau abhitaḥ parigṛhnīte anapakrāmiṇau kurute'.

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the higher two varṇas, are described as complete ones. S.B. 6-6-3-12 says, 'Incomplete is he who is not either a Kṣatriya, nor a Purohita.'[23]

The attitude of the Brāhmaṇas towards the Vaiśyas.

The fact that the Kṣatriya or ruling class found favour with the Brāhmaṇas and that the latter looked down upon the Vaiśyas is crystal clear from the Br. texts. The Brāhmaṇas could tolerate the temporal lordship of the Kṣatriyas and respect them accordingly but they never allowed the Vaiśyas to equal or tower above the Kṣatriyas. Both the priestly class and the ruling class desired that the Vaiśya community should be obedient and subservient to them. S.B. 5-1-5-28 is a passage in point. The chapter deals with the Rājasūya sacrifice. There is a particular function in that sacrifice called 'Madhu-graha' or 'Holding of the cup' ceremony. The particular Brāhmaṇa priest belonging to the Yajurveda order known as Adhvaryu presents a cup to a Kṣatriya and another to a Vaiśya, and in doing so 'the priest imbues the Kṣatriya with truth, prosperity and light, and smites the Vaiśya with untruth, misery and darkness.'[24]

Dependence on the ruling class.

Vaiśyas are frequently enjoined to obey the Kṣatriyas unquestioningly because their trade and agriculture can only flourish if there is a mighty king to provide protection against enemies and marauders. S.B. 1-3-2-15 observes that a Vaiśya becomes possessed of cattle when he is under the rule of a Kṣatriya.[25] Without a king or protector his life and property are insecure.

THE STATUS OF THE KṢATRIYA :—

The king is the owner of all land.

From the foregoing discussion the Kṣatriya's supreme position as temporal ruler, protector and fighter is evident. The King was looked upon as the symbol of vigour, strength and state.[26] The Kṣatriya was the owner of the land and the Brāhmaṇa, Vaiśya and śūdra were tenants. Land belonged to the state.

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23. 'Asarvaṃ vā tad yat akṣatriyo vā apurohito vā'.

24. 'Vaiśyasya vā rājanyasya vā pāṇāvadadhat āha anena ta imaṃ niṣkrīṇāmīti. Satyaṃ vai śrīrjyotiḥ somo'mṛtaṃ pāpmā tamaḥ surā satyamevaitat śriyaṃ jyotir yajamāne dadhāti, anṛtena pāpmanā tamasā vaiśyaṃ vidhyati'.

25. 'Kṣatriyasyaiva vaśe sati vaiśyaṃ paśava upatiṣṭhante'.

26. A.B. 8-37-3,—'Ojaḥ kṣatraṃ vīryaṃ rājanyaḥ'.

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For this reason, as stated in A.B. 7-20, the priestly class, the nobility and the Vaiśya had to beg land of the King for performing sacrifices whereas the king himself had to beg the same from the Sun-god who is the divine Kṣatra for the said purpose.[27]

Subjects pay taxes to the king.

People used to pay taxes to the king for the maintenance of the state. 'These people, *i.e.*, subjects pay taxes or tribute to the Kṣatriya.'[28] We shall not enter into the discussion of the political status of the king in this chapter ; that topic will be taken up in the next chapter dealing with the political aspects of the later vedic civilisation.

No caste except the Brāhmaṇa is allowed to partake of sacrificial oblations.

The Kṣatriya was entitled to perform sacrifices ; like the Brāhmaṇa and the Vaiśya he also is a Yajñiya but he has no right to partake of the oblations of sacrifice. Brāhmaṇas alone had the exclusive privilege to partake of sacrificial oblations. Hence they are called 'Hutāda' whereas Kṣatriyas and Vaiśyas are termed 'Ahutāda.' Śūdras are entitled neither to perform sacrifices nor to partake of the oblations thereof. A.B. 7-34-1 states,—'Those subjects are Hutāda (partaker of oblations) who are Brāhmaṇas ; Rājanyas, Vaiśyas and Śūdras are Ahutāda (non-partaker of oblations).[29]

Duties of a king.

The dress and conveyances of the Kṣatriya were gorgeous and majestic befitting his social status and noble profession. 'Men of the military or ruling class', observes the S.B., 'are known by their chariot and missile.'[30] A Kṣatriya should always be prepared to fight his enemies, punish miscreants and render help and succour to the needy and afflicted. On account of the frequent inroads of Dasyus and other tribal chiefs he had to engage in constant warfare and skirmishes. Hence it is said, 'Fighting is Rājanya's strength.'[31] The Kṣatriya was the guardian of the law as well. His function was both executive and legislative.

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27. 'Daivaṃ Kṣatraṃ yācet, Ādityādāhuḥ, Ādityo vai daiva-kṣatram'.

28. S.B. 1-3-2-15,—'Imā viśaḥ kṣatriyāya valiṃ haranti'.

29. 'Etā vai prajā hutādo yad brāhmaṇā athaitā ahutādo yad rājanyo vaiśyaḥ śūdra iti'.

30. S.B. 1-2-4-2,—'Rathena ca śareṇa ca rājanya-vandhavaḥ'.

31. S.B. 13-1-5-6,—'Yuddhaṃ vai rājanyasya vīryam'.

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The high esteem which the Kṣatriyas enjoyed and the grand conception of Kingship are evident from many passages of the Brs. The king was regarded as the great protector of the people, the maintainer of law and order, the mainstay of four castes and the terror of the enemies. Observes the A.B.,—'The Kṣatriya was born, *i.e.*, the overlord of all beings was born ; the employer of the commoner was born ; the slayer of the enemy was born ; the protector of the Brahmins was born.'[32]

The grand conception of kingship.

The social status of both the Brāhmaṇas and the Kṣatriyas will stand out in bold relief if we discuss the relation that existed between the priestly class and the ruling class.

RELATION BETWEEN THE BRĀHMAṆA AND THE KṢATRIYA :—

The Brāhmaṇa and Kṣatriya were the two superior classes. The former comprised the priestly class while the latter the military or ruling class or the nobility. The former were spiritual guardians of the people whereas the latter were the temporal lords. The co-operation of the two was essential for the upkeep and smooth running of the social and political machinery. Amongst the gods in the heavenly kingdom Indra was Kṣatriya whereas Bṛhaspati was Brāhmaṇa.[33] Bṛhaspati was both the spiritual guide (Purohita) and Prime Minister of Indra. Active co-operation between the two was indispensable for smooth administration. Likewise on earth the same example was emulated with profit and the same ideal relation was maintained between the earthly King and Brāhmaṇas.

The co-operation between the two classes.

In the bid for social ascendancy we find that the Brāhmaṇas always endeavoured to maintain their superiority over the Kṣatriyas in particular and the other three castes in general. This assertion is amply borne out by the following Brāhmanical texts.

The Brāhmaṇa was produced from the mouth of the Supreme Lord or Creator. As the head is the best limb of the

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32. 8-17,—'Kṣatriyo'jani, Viśvasya bhūtasyādhipatirajani, viśamattājani, amitrāṇāṃ hantājani, brāhmaṇānāṃ goptājani'.

33. S.B. 5-1-1-11,—'Brahma hi Bṛhaspatir brahma hi brāhmaṇaḥ Kṣatraṃ hīndraḥ kṣatraṃ rājanyaḥ'.

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human organism, towering above other limbs, being the seat of intelligence, so the Brāhmaṇa was regarded as superior to all other castes. In the texts quoted below the term Brahma means Brāhmaṇa and Kṣatra means Kṣatriya or Rājanya. A.B. 8-1 and 8-4 repeat : 'Brahma is prior to Kṣatra.'[34] 'The Brahma is yoked before the Kṣatra, for the Brahma comes before the Kṣatra', remarks P.B. 11-1-2.[35] The Brāhmaṇa was not only superior to the Kṣatriya but, in fact, the Kṣatriya was subservient to the Brāhmaṇa just as the Vaiśya was subservient to the Kṣatriya. A.B. 2-10-1 is a passage in point which states 'thereby he makes the Kṣatriya subservient to the Brāhmaṇa and the Vaiśya subserve the Kṣatriya.[36] 'He makes the Kṣatriya and Vaiśya subordinate to the Brāhmaṇa.'[37] The reason as to why a Brāhmin should precede a Kṣatriya in all sacrificial rituals is stated in the same Br. 'If Brahma precedes Kṣatra the Kingdom of that Kṣatriya Yajamāna (sacrificer) will grow strong and ward off invaders.'[38] A farther reference to the beneficial results of a Kṣatriya's obedience to a Brāhmaṇa occurs in A.B. 8-37-5, which runs as follows :—'That kingdom becomes prosperous and teems with heroes where the king is submissive to the Brāhmaṇa ; such a king is blessed with valiant sons.'[39]

The Superiority of the Brāhmaṇa.

King enjoined to subserve Brāhmaṇa.

A Kṣatriya was entitled to perform sacrifices, *i.e.*, to say, he could be a Yajamāna. One desirous of performing any sacrifice had to perform the Dīkṣanīya-iṣṭi first. By this ceremony the sacrificer was initiated or ordained. It was believed that he was re-born ; it was his spiritual birth which absolved him of past sins and limitations. It was said that after this initiation

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34. 'Brahma vai kṣatrāt pūrvam'.

35. 'Brahma tat pūrvaṃ kṣatrāt yujyate, brahmahi pūrvaṃ kṣatrāt'.

36. 'Brahmaṇi eva tat kṣatramanu-nijunakti.....kṣatre eva tad viśamanu-nijunakti'

37. P.B. 11-11-1,—'Brahmaṇe kṣatraṃ ca viśaṃ cānuge karoti'.

38. A.B. 8-36-4,—'Brahma khalu vai kṣatrāt pūrvaṃ brahma-purastāt ma ugraṃ rāṣṭramavyathyam'.

39. 'Tat yatra vai brāhmaṇaḥ kṣatraṃ vaśameti tad rāṣṭraṃ samṛddhaṃ tad vīravadāha, asmin vīro jāyate'.

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ceremony a Kṣatriya became a Brāhmaṇa.[40] It was only by relinquishing his own weapons and dress and by taking the garb of a Brāhmaṇa that a Rājanya had access to sacrifice. This fact also goes to prove the superiority of the Brāhmaṇas to the ruling class in the spiritual sphere. The superiority of the Brāhmins to the Kṣatriyas has also been expressed through significant similes in the Brs. The K.B. compares the Brāhmaṇa with the full-moon and the Kṣatriya with the dark moon.[41] The T.B. speaks of the former in terms of daylight and of the latter in terms of night.[42]

A Kṣatriya becomes a Brāhmaṇa when he performs sacrifices.

The Brāhmaṇas carefully guarded the sacred lore and did not allow the Kṣatriyas to be masters of spiritual and ritualistic knowledge in the Brāhmanical or later Vedic age. This tendency of the Brāhmaṇas finds expression in certain passages. In S.B. 11-8-4-5 we are told that the counsellors of the Brāhmin Khaṇḍika Audbhāri forbade him to enlighten the King of the Kesin about a certain rite of atonement ; because if he was enlightened the king would be a gainer whereas the Brāhmaṇa would gain nothing. Thus the Brāhmin mused,—'If I tell him, his race, not mine will prevail here, but I shall gain the (other) world ; and if I do not tell him, my own race, not his, will prevail here, but he will gain the (other) world.[43]

His Suppression by the Brāhmāṇa.

S.B. 4-1-4-6 makes the striking observation that the Brāhmaṇa should be without a king whereas a king should never be without a Brāhmaṇa. 'It is quite proper that a Brāhmaṇa should be without a king, but were he to have a King it will be conducive to the success of both. It is, however quite improper that a king should be without a Brāhmaṇa.....A Kṣatriya intending to do a deed ought by all means to

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40. A.B. 7-34-5,—'Sa (Kṣatriyaḥ) dīkṣamāṇa eva brahmaṇatamabhyupaiti'.

41. 4-8, 'Brahma vai paurṇamāsī kṣatramamāvasyā.

42. 3-9-14-3,—'Brahmaṇo vai rūpamahaḥ kṣatrasya rātriḥ'.

43. 'Yadi asmai vakṣyāmi amuṣyaivedaṃ prajā bhaviṣyati na mama.... ....yadi u vā asmai na vakṣyāmi mamaivedaṃ prajā bhaviṣyati nāmuṣya.....bhaviṣyatīti'.

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resort to a Brāhmaṇa for he verily succeeds in the deed when sped by the Brāhmaṇa.'[44] 'The Kṣatriya should approach the Brāhmaṇa for guidance when he is out to undertake any enterprise.'

Apart from this competition or struggle for ascendancy in the social scale, as a rule, there was perfect co-operation, mutual goodwill and understanding between the Brāhmaṇas and Kṣatriyas. The real strength and progress of the Society lay in the concerted functioning of these two important classes.

Mutual co-operation between the two classes, two vital forces of the society.

The two together maintained the balance of power in the socio-political sphere. He who was either a priest (Brāhmaṇa) or a noble (Kṣatriya) was regarded as a complete whole ; Vaiśyas and Śūdras were regarded as incomplete. S.B. 6-6-3-12, already cited above, says,—'Incomplete is he who is not either a noble or a priest.' The same Br. thus proclaims the importance of the said two classes,—'Brahma and Kṣatra are the two vital forces' (of the Society).[45] The reciprocity and interdependence of these two castes, is clearly set forth in A.B. 8-36-2, which observes : 'Kṣatra is founded on Brāhmaṇa and Brāhmaṇa is founded on Kṣatra.'[46] Spiritual and sacerdotal powers were vested in the Brāhmaṇa whereas the discharge of civic duties and the smooth running of the administration devolved on the Kṣatriya. 'Just as heaven and earth work in concert for the smooth working of the cosmic process, just as the ṚK hymns and Sāma chants join hands for the completion of the sacrifice, so we the Brāhmaṇas and Kṣatriyas work in unison for the smooth functioning of the civic machinery,' remarks A.B. 8-40-4. The literal translation of this passage reads as follows :—'I am the firmanent, thou art the earth, I am sāman, thou art ṚK ; we together discharge the duties relating to the body politic.'[47]

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44. Yad brāhmaṇo'rājanyaḥ syād yadyu rājānaṃ labhate samṛddhaṃ tadetad ha.....kṣatriyeṇa karma kariṣyamāṇenopasartavya eva brāhmaṇaḥ..... ṛdhyate'.

45. 'Brahma ca kṣatraṃ cāśāsta ubhe virye'.

46. 'Brahmaṇi khalu vai kṣatraṃ pratiṣṭhitaṃ, kṣatre brahma'.

47. 'Dyouraham pṛthivī tvaṁ sāmāham ṛk tvaṃ tāveha saṃvahāvahai'. Sāyaṇa interprets,—'Tau ubhau āvāmiha rāṣṭra ā samantāt purāṇi tadupalakṣita-grāmāṃśca saṃvahāvahai samyag vahanaṃ purādinirvāhaṃ karāvāvahai'.

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Every king had a Purohita who was naturally a Brāhmin. The position of the Purohita was that of a Chief Minister who gave counsel in matters both spiritual and temporal. Bṛhaspati was the priest and chief minister of King Indra. Bṛhaspati is a Brāhmaṇa. The King and his Brāhmaṇa priest together make up the administrative machinery. Hence a Brāhmin or Purohita is regarded as the half of a Kṣatriya. A.B. 7-34-8 puts it thus,—'The Purohita is one-half of the Kṣatriya's soul.'[48]

This co-operation between the priestly class and the ruling class is finely stated in T.S. 5-1-10-3. The difference between a Brāhmin attended with a Rājanya and one without a Rājanya or Kṣatriya, and the difference between a Kṣatriya plus a Brāhmaṇa and a Kṣatriya minus a Brāhmaṇa is stated in unambiguous language in the text in question :—'He quickens the Kṣatra by the Brāhmaṇa and the Brāhmaṇa by the Kṣatra ; hence a Brāhmin who has a Kṣatriya is superior to another Brāhmin ; likewise a Rājanya who has a Brāhmaṇa is superior to another Kṣatriya.[49]

Superiority of the Kṣatriya over the Brāhmaṇas.

As a rule the Brāhmaṇa was superior to the Kṣatriya but on certain occasions, *e.g.*, in the Rājasūya sacrifice the Kṣatriya's superiority was acknowledged by the Brāhmaṇa. 'There is nothing superior to the Kṣatriya. Hence the Brāhmaṇa worships Kṣatriya from a lower position in the Rājasūya'.[50] 'The three other castes (including the Brāhmins) follow the Kṣatriya who goes first.' [51] Whenever he wanted to subjugate or conquer a Brāhmin the King may do so.'[52]

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48. 'Ardhātmo ha vā eṣa kṣatriyasya yat Purohitaḥ'.

49. 'Brahmaṇaiva kṣatraṃ saṃśyati kṣatreṇa Brahma tasmād brāhmaṇo rājanyavān atyanyaṃ brāhmaṇaṃ tasmād rājanyo brāhmaṇavān atyanyaṃ rajanyam'.

50. S.B. 14-4-2-23,—'Kṣatrāt paraṃ nāsti tasmād brāhmaṇaḥ kṣatriyamadhastādupāste rājasūye'.

51. S.B. 6-4-4-13,—'Kṣatriyaṃ prathamaṃ yantamitare trayo varṇāḥ paścādanuyanti'.

52. T.B. 3-9-14,—'Yadā vai rājā kāmayate atha brāhmaṇaṃ jināti'.

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THE STATUS OF THE BRĀHMAṆA :—

The foregoing discussion concerning the relationship between the Brāhmaṇa and the Kṣatriya throws ample light on the status of the Brāhmaṇa in the later vedic society. A few observations may be made under the present head of discussion. The supreme position of the Brāhmaṇa as the spiritual guide and as the Prime Minister of the King in temporal or socio-political matters has already been reviewed.

Supreme position of the Brāhmaṇas.

All the three castes, Brāhmaṇa, Kṣatriya and Vaiśya, were eligible to performance of sacrifice, *i.e.*, to say, they were yajñiya, but the Brāhmaṇa alone had the exclusive privilege to partake of the holy leavings or sacred oblations of the sacrifice. He alone was 'Hutāda' whereas the others were Ahutāda.

Partaking of sacrificial oblation, their exclusive privilege.

Though there was reciprocity and division of duty between the Kṣatriya and the Brāhmaṇa, the latter was superior to the former in the social status. The earthly king is the ruler of all three castes but he is not the king of the Brāhmaṇas. While consecrating the king during the coronation ceremony the Brāhmaṇas announce to the people,—'God Soma is the King of us *i.e.*, Brāhmaṇas : he thereby excludes the Brāhmaṇas from the power of the King and makes them such as are not to be fed upon or exploited by the King.'[53] This text of the S.B. testifies to the unique prerogative and prestige of the Brāhmaṇas. 'Soma is the King of the Brāhmaṇas', observes the T.B.[54]

The killing of a Brāhmaṇa was regarded as one of the vilest of crimes. The law strictly prohibited murder or manhandling of Brāhmaṇas. S.B. 3-9-4-17 makes this categorical statement : 'Whosoever kills a human Brāhmaṇa is deemed guilty'.[55]

The Killing of Brs. prohibited.

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53. 'Somo smākaṃ brāhmaṇānāṃ rājeti brāhmaṇānevopoddharati anādyān karoti'.

54. 1-7-4-2, 1-7-6-7,—'Soma-rājāno brāhmaṇāḥ'.

55. 'Yo nu evemaṃ mānuṣaṃ brāhmaṇaṃ hanti taṃ nveva paricakṣate, atha ya etaṃ devo hi somo ghanti vā enaṃ'.

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The King also could not oppress the Brāhmaṇas at his sweet will as he was afraid of moral retribution or divine wrath. S.B. 13-1-5-4 states, 'When the King chooses he may oppress the Brāhmaṇas, but he will fare the worse or become the poorer for doing so.'[56]

The gods such as Agni, Sūrya, Mitra, Varuṇa, Indra, Marut, Rudra, etc., who are invoked in sacrifices, are known as heavenly gods or divine deities. Likewise a Brāhmaṇa was regarded as a human deity or god on earth. S.B. 4-3-4-4 states this in the following terms,—'There are two kinds of gods. One kind comprises the celestial or divine deities whereas the learned Brahmins versed in the sacred lore are human gods or gods amongst men. Hence sacrifice is divided into two parts (in relation to divine deities and human gods). Oblations (offered in sacrifice) are homage or gift offered to divine deities whereas human gods or Brāhmaṇas are propitiated with Dakṣiṇā or sacrificial fee.[57]

The Brāhmaṇa is the earthly god.

Because of their exalted position in the social hierarchy the Brāhmaṇas enjoyed four exclusive privileges as mentioned in S.B. 11-5-7-1 ; 'People should protect the Brāhmaṇas by performing four duties,—by (showing him) respect and liberality, acknowledging his invincibility and by granting him security against capital punishment.'[58]

Four special privileges.

The Ṣaḍ. Br. calls the Brāhmins gods amongst men. 'Those who are Brāhmins are veritable gods among human beings'.[59]

The T.B. also lends support to this belief. 'The Brāhmaṇa is a divine caste.'[60] The mouth of a Brāhmaṇa was regarded as

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56. 'Yadā vai rājā kāmayate brāhmaṇaṃ jināti papiyāṃstu bhavati'.

57. 'Dvayā vai devāḥ. Atha devā atha ye brāhmaṇāḥ suśruvāṃso'-nucānāste manuṣya-devatāsteṣāṃ dvedhā vibhakta eva yajñaḥ. Āhutaya eva devānaṃ dakṣiṇa, manuṣyadevanaṃ Brāhmaṇanāṃ.....dakṣiṇābhirmanuṣyadevān brāhmaṇānāṃ'.

58. 'Caturbhirdharmair brāhmaṇaṃ bhunakti arcayā ca dānena cājeyatayā cāvadhyatayā'.

59. 'Atha hai te manuṣyadevā ye brāhmaṇāḥ'.

60. 1-2-6-7,—'Daivyo vai varṇo brāhmaṇaḥ'.

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holy as the sacred sacrificial fire where oblations were offered to gods. [61]

THE STATUS OF THE PUROHITA :—

The discussion of the status of Brāhmaṇa will remain incomplete without taking into consideration the status of the Purohita who was inevitably a Brāhmaṇa. To-day the term Purohita means an ordinary priest but it had a wider denotation and deeper significance in the Vedic age. The office of a Purohita was an important office held by the Brāhmins in ancient India. Every king or noble had his domestic priest or chaplain who also functioned as the Chief adviser or Prime Minister of the King in matters both temporal and spiritual. He used to precede the king both physically and metaphorically. In the ṚgVeda Saṃhitā, 4-50-8, Bṛhaspati the priest and guide of Indra is said to precede Indra : 'He goes before the King' (yasmin brahmā rājani pūrvameti). 'The human priest followed in the wake of Bṛhaspati,' says Aitareya Brāhmaṇa 8-40-3. He used to advise the king on important social, political and religious issues and show the way. In consultation with him the monarch dictated the policy of the govt. 'The priest surrounds and protects the king with his powers just as the ocean girdles the earth.' (Purohitastābhīḥ rājānaṃ parigṛhya tiṣṭhati samudra eva bhūmim). 'The subjects of that king live in perfect harmony, and are devoted to him who is guided by a wise priest.' (A.B. 8-40-2).

Importance of the Purohita in the Vedic age.

He is the Chief Adviser to the King on all matters.

The Kṣatriyas who were Kings and represented the nobility could not do without a Brāhmaṇa or priest. Their spiritual guide was a priest in religious affairs ; again, their chief adviser or minister in temporal matters or socio-political issues was the Priest or Purohita.

The Brāhmaṇa texts constantly stress the importance of a Brahmin minister or Purohita for the purposes of administration ; he was indispensable to the King and the King had to seek his advice in all important matters relating to govt. in times

61. P.B. 16-6-14, 'Āhutir vā eṣā yad brāhmaṇasya mukham'.

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of both peace and war. In the post-vedic age Cānakya or Kautilya, the Chief Minister of Emperor Candragupta Maurya, is a glowing instance of this system of govt. He was a brahmin and, in fact, he was the chief architect of the Maurya empire,—the main force, the motive power behind the administration of Candragupta.

A.B. 8-40-4 observes : 'Other kings befriend that king and his enemy is vanquished who has for his minister a learned Purohita who is the protector of the state (Rāṣṭra-gopa).'[62] A Purohita was regarded as one-half of the Kṣatriya *i.e.*, the king's soul. Bṛhaspati was the Purohita of the gods and the gods could conquer heaven only because they had Bṛhaspati as their supreme guide and adviser.[63]

Exceptional Administrative ability of Purohitas.

Castes other than the Brāhmaṇas must have priests. It was a convention that every Kṣatriya had his chaplain or family priest ; he traced his descent (gotra) from a particular Ṛṣi or Priest and it was essential that during the coronation ceremony the name of the King-initiate or King-designate should be announced along with the name of his priest or Ṛṣi. This fact is stated in clear and unmistakable terms in A.B. 7-34-7.[64] The eighth book (Pañcikā) of the A.B., Chapter XXI, XXII and XXIII in particular, give a long list of Kings who were initiated or consecrated after the manner of the great consecration ceremony (Mahā-abhiṣeka) of Indra by their respective Purohitas with the result that they were victorious everywhere and became paramount sovereigns. These chapters in question emphasise the supreme importance of Brāhmaṇa Purohitas in matters of administration and clearly state that the victory of the paramount sovereigns were mainly due to the guidance of Brāhmaṇa priests or ministers. One important point merits mention here. Any and every Brahmin was not fit or

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62. 'Tasya rājā mitraṃ bhavati dviṣantamapavādhate yasyaivaṃ vidvān brāhmaṇo rāṣṭragopaḥ purohitaḥ'.

63. 'Bṛhaspati-purohitā vai devā ajanayan svargaṃ lokaṃ hyasmin loke' jayanta.

64. A.B. 7-34-7,—'Nidhāya vā eṣa svānyayudhāni brahmaṇa evāyudhaiḥ brahmaṇo rupeṇa brahma bhūtvā yajñamupāvartata tasmād..... purohitasyārṣeyeṇa pravaraṃ pravṛṇīranu'.

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allowed to be a Purohita. The two epithets of Purohita in A.B. 8-40-4 already quoted above, *viz.*, 'learned' (Vidvān) and 'protector of the state' (Rāṣṭragopa), single out the fit Purohitas from the common run of Brāhmaṇas.

In the Ṛg Vedic hymn concerning Bṛhaspati, cited above, it is said that 'the subjects bow down of their own accord before that King who is always preceded by the priest.'[65] There is evidence in the Brāhmaṇas to show that some highly efficient Brāhmaṇas held the office of Purohita of two Kingdoms simultaneously. S.B. 2-4-4-5 is a passage in point. It states,—'Devabhāga Śrautarṣa was the Purohita to both the Kurus and the Sṛñjayas. Now, a high position is held by him who is the Purohita of one Kingdom ; how much higher, then, is the position of one who is Purohita of two kingdoms.'[66]

A Purohita who could look after the administration of two states was regarded as highly efficient. Not to speak of two states we have evidence that even three states were controlled by one priest. Śānkhyāyana Śrauta sūtra (16-29-5) bears testimony to the fact that the three famous states of ancient India kāśī, kośala and Videha had one and the same priest.[67] This fact proves the close connection and alliance of these three states and the extra-ordinary administrative ability of the Brahmin Priest as well, Jāla Jātūkarṇya by name.

They managed the administration of two, even three States.

In the consecration ceremony, though the Kṣatriya, *i.e.*, the King, is the Yajamāna (sacrificer), he had to relinquish the sacrificer's share to the Purohita. This is enjoined in the A.B.

Again, at the commencement of a sacrifice a Kṣatriya had to take a solemn vow not to injure or harm the priest throughout

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65. 'Tasmai viśaḥ svayamevānamate yasmin brahmā rājani pūrvameti'.

66. 'Devabhāgaḥ śrautarṣaḥ sa ubhayeṣāṃ kurūṇāṃ ca sṛñjayānāṃ ca purohita āsa. Paramatā vai sā yo nu evaikasya rāṣṭrasya purohito'sat sā nveva paramatā kimu yo dvayoḥ'.

67. 'Jālo Jātūkarṇyaḥ.....trayāṇāṃ rājyaṃ..... prāpa.....kāśya-vaidehayoḥ purohito babhūva. Kauśalyasya ca rājñaḥ'.

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his lifetime. The oath is thus recorded in the A.B. 'From the night of my birth to that of my death, for the space between these two, my sacrifice and my gifts, my place, my good deeds, my life and my offspring mayest thou take, if I play thee false.'[68]

The King's oath not to play his priest false.

How divine wrath visits a king who cheats or plays false with a Purohita is finely narrated in A.B. 7-23. The Kṣatriya King, Atyarāti Jānantapi, had to pay dearly for cheating his Brahmin Purohita, Vaśiṣṭha Satyahavya.

Castes Other Than The Four Castes :—

Mention is made of lower castes who were termed Nīcya and Apācya. The A.B. (8.38.3) observes that the Kings of such lower castes called the Nīcyas and Apācyas residing in the western direction were consecrated for the Svārājya type of kingship and not for other higher types.[69] Sāyaṇa remarks commenting on the text in question that these castes rank very low in the hierarchy of castes and are inferior to others in their manners and ways of life.[70]

Nīcyas & Apācyas.

Various outcasts and Dasyus are mentioned in the A.B. in connection with the anecdote of Viśvāmitra. The grandsons of Viśvāmitra though born of royal family went down to the lowest rung of the caste system. They disobeyed their father and sage Viśvāmitra being exceeding wroth cursed them thus,—'Be thy children turned into the lowest of all castes.' The A.B. records this fact thus,—'Viśvāmitra cursed them saying,—'Your children shall belong to the lowest of castes' such as Andhras, Puṇḍras, Śabaras, Pulindas and Mūtibas. Though born of Viśvāmitra's royal family they turned out to be outcasts and chiefs of Dasyus

Various outcasts.

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68. 8-39-1,—'Yāṃ ca rātrīmajāye'haṃ yāṃ ca pretāsmi tadubhayamantareṇa iṣṭāpūrtaṃ me lokaṃ sukṛtamāyuḥ prajāṃ vṛñjīthā yadi te druhyeyam'.

69. 'Pratīcyāṃ diśi ye ke ca nīcyānāṃ rājāno ye apācyānāṃ svārājyāyaiva te abhiṣiñcanti'.

70. 'Nikarṣamavantīti nīcyāḥ apakarṣamavantīti Apācyāḥ, jātyā nikarṣāḥ, vyāvahāreṇāpakarṣāḥ.

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or non-Aryan marauders.'[71] They were thus outside the aryan fold. The Andhras originally lived in the tract bordered by the rivers Kṛṣṇā and Godāvarī. The Telegu-speaking people of the Deccan represent the Andhras. The Mahābhārata locates the Puṇḍras in Bengal and Bihar. The exact location of the Śabaras is not known. There was close alliance of Andhras and Pulindas during Aśoka's time. The territory of the Mūtibas has not yet been traced.

As a rule the lower castes, mixed castes and outcasts were looked down upon by the higher castes. We have discussed the relation that existed between the two higher castes and the Vaiśyas and Śūdras in the foregoing pages. Exception to this general practice is also met with. If a man of the lower caste or mixed caste happened to possess the wisdom of the Brāhmaṇas, if he was highly enlightened he was held in esteem by the priestly class even. The A.B., records the anecdote of Kavaṣa, son of Ilūṣa.[72] In the days of yore the sages attended a sessional sacrifice called Sattra performed on the bank of the river Sarasvatī. Finding in their midst Kavaṣa, son of Ilūṣa, who was a bastard born of a maid-servant, the sages thought 'how could this bastard born of a maid-servant, a cheat who is not a brahmin be initiated into the sacrifice with us.' Musing thus the sages expelled him from the sacrificial campus of the Somayāga and transported him to a land far away from the river Sarasvatī where no water was available so that he might die of thirst. But Kavaṣa was granted the vision of the Vedic hymn called 'Aponaptrīya Sūkta,'[73] and citing that hymn he gained the favour of the Water-god ; the river Sarasvatī began to flow on all four sides of him. Then the sages who had externed him ruthlessly were sorry for their hasty act. They called him back and

Men of lower castes honoured and regarded as seers for their knowledge and spiritual uplift.

Illustrations.

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71. 7-33-6,—'Antān vaḥ prajā Bhakṣīṣṭeti ta ete Andhrāḥ Puṇḍrāḥ śabarāḥ Pulindā Mūtibā ityudanta, bahavo Vaiśvāmitrā Dasyūnāṃ bhūyiṣṭhāḥ'.

72. 2-8-1-,—'Ṛṣayo vai sarasvatyāṃ satramāsata. Te Kavaṣamaiīūṣaṃ.....etadaponaptrīyamapaśyat'.

73. R.V. X-30.

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accepted him as one of their colleagues. The K.B. also recounts the same story with slight variations. 'The sages said to him (Kavaṣa), 'You are a bastard born of a maid-servant ; we shall not dine with you.' Kavaṣa became angry and propitiated goddess Sarasvatī with this hymn. Then the sages considered him as shorn of sin and made obeisance to him saying, 'O seer, we bow down to you ; please do not bear any malice towards us ; you are superior to us, as Sarasvatī follows after thee.' Thus they appeased his wrath.'[74] These texts of the A.B. and the K.B. are of great importance as they categorically prove the fact that vedic hymns were seen by the sages of lower castes as well, and that the Brahmins representing the highest caste admitted the superiority of and paid regards to such enlightened souls though they belonged to low castes. Kavaṣa was addressed as a 'Ṛṣi,' 'seer' by the priests. Thus we find that learning or enlightenment could wipe out the barrier of caste and obtain recognition. We may cite the instance of Mahidāsa, the author of the A.B. as another illustration in point. A controversy rages round his name as to whether Mahidāsa was a Śūdra. His birth and the traditional story concerning his parentage has been stated in the introduction to this work. His mother's name was Itarā and his father had other sons by his other wives as well. The father lavished his affection on his other sons whereas Mahidāsa was shabbily treated. From this differential treatment of the father, from the name of the mother, and the Śūdra-like name of Mahidāsa having the word 'dāsa' suffixed, many scholars headed by the erudite vedic scholar of name and fame Satyavrata Sāmaśramī arrive at the conclusion that Mahidāsa's mother belonged to the Śūdra community. Observes Sāmaśramī : 'That he was born of a female slave (Dāsī) or maid-servant is an established fact ; .....not to speak of the authorship of a Brāhmaṇa text,

Anecdote of Kavaṣa.

Mahidāsa, the Author of the A.B.

Men of low castes as seers of Vedic hymn and authors of Br.

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74. 12-3,—'Madhyamāḥ sarasvatyāṃ satramāsata. Taddhāpi kavaṣo .....
.....tasya ha krodhaṃ vininyuḥ'.

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even vision (authorship) of Vedic hymns (mantra) is ascribed to the son of a maid-servant (Dāsīputra).[75] He cites the ancedote of Kavaṣa to bear out his contention that bastards born of female servants are credited with the authorship of not only a Br. but also mantra, *i.e.* Vedic hymn. S.B. 11-6-2-10 records that Brahmins declared sage Kṣatıiya King Janaka to be a Brāhmaṇa on account of his spiritual attainment and knowledge, par excellence.

In this recognition of the enlightened persons belonging to lower castes one may trace the origin of the upgrading of the caste through knowledge and illumination met with in the upaniṣadic and post-vedic age. Caste or birth cannot stand a bar to a man's spiritual amelioration or scholarly aspiration. The Dharmasūtras lend support to this view and attach greater importance to spiritual attainment than to heredity in express terms. Observes Āpastamba, 'Through acts of piety the inferior castes attain to the status of their immediate higher castes ; similarly, through vice or sinful acts higher castes are degraded to their next immediate lower castes.'[76] Manu also lends countenance to this view when he asserts the truth,—'Through illumination or learning a Śūdra attains to the status of a Brāhmaṇa and a Brāhmaṇa becomes a Śūdra through ignorance.'[77] 'The distinction of Ārya and Anārya, Aryan and non-Aryan is not determined by birth but by merits.'[78] We have seen how grandsons of Viśvāmitra of royal descent became outcast tribes and gangsters on account of the non-Aryanlike conduct of their fathers. In this instance also heredity was overshadowed by conduct.

Upgrading of caste through knowledge and illumination.

Heredity superseded by knowledge and conduct.

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75. Aitareyālocanam, Page 14,—'Sidhyatyeva (Mahidāsasya) Dāsīputratvam.....mantradaṣṭṛtvamapi jñāyate Dāsīputrasyāpīti'.

76. Āpastamba-Dharma-sūtra, 2-5-10, 11,—'Dharmacaryayā jaghanyo varṇaḥ pūrvaṃ pūrvaṃ varṇamāpadyate jātiparivṛttau'. 'Adharmacaryayā pūrvo varṇo jaghanyaṃ jaghanyaṃ varṇamā-padyate jātiparivṛttau'.

77. Manusaṃhitā, 10-65, 'Śūdro brāhmaṇatāmeti brāhmaṇaśceti śūdratāṃ'.

78. Manusaṃhitā, 10-66,—'Āryānāryo bhaved guṇaiḥ.

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The Śatarudrīya hymn of the V.S.[79] mentions nearly seventy varieties of profession. Every profession was meant for a particular caste in ancient India. We do not know whether this principle applies to this case ; in that case it will have to be admitted that many castes emerged during the period of the V.S. as a result of mixture of castes of every description.

Various mixed castes and professions.

These professions have been enumerated in Book I under 'Occupations and Industries.' Besides these occupations and four castes, some outcasts and semi Aryan tribes are also mentioned in the V.S. in the same chapter, such as Niṣāda, Bainda (wild tribesman like Niṣāda), Kaivarta (fisherman), Mārgāra (son of a huntsman), Kirāta, Jambhaka (flesh-eating tribe), Paulkasa (son born of a Niṣāda father and a Kṣatriya mother), and Caṇḍāla.

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79. V.S. Chapter XVI.

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BOOK I

CHAPTER III

WOMEN & MARRIAGE :

Marriage was looked upon as a sacrament and not a contract. Child marriage was not known in the Vedic or later Vedic age. It was almost compulsory for every man and woman to marry. Exceptions go to prove this general custom. A man was regarded incomplete without a wife. 'Man regards him', says A.B. 1-2-5, 'as a complete whole when he secures a wife'[1]. The S.B. goes further and declares, 'wife is the one-half of the husband ; hence one is not fully born but remains incomplete till he gets a wife. One gets everything and becomes a complete whole when he is blessed with a wife'[2]. These passages at once prove the importance of marriage and woman in the social set-up. Moreover, one without a wife had no access to the performance of any sacrifice because every sacrifice had to be performed by the husband and wife, yajamāna (sacrificer) and yajamāna-patnī (wife of the sacrificer) jointly. The very word Patnī etymologically means 'one who helps the husband in performing sacrifice'. This is evident from Paṇini's rule 'Patyurnaḥyajñasaṃyoge', i.e. to say, 'Patnī' is derived from the base 'Pati' and the suffix 'na' is added to the base 'Pati' in the sense of 'connection with sacrifice'. Hence one who is without a wife whether a widower or a bachelor was not allowed to perform sacrifice.[3] Gods do not accept oblations from their

Importance of wife and woman.

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1. 'Tasmād puruṣo jāyāṃ vittvā kṛtsnataramivātmānaṃ manyate.'

2. S.B, 5-2-1-10,—'Ardho ha vā eṣā atmano yajjāyā tasmād yāvajjāyāṃ na vindate naiva tāvat prajāyate ; sarvo hi tāvad bhavatyatha yadaiva jāyāṃ vindate.

3 S.B. 5-1-6-10,—'Ayajñiyo vaiṣa yo'patnīkaḥ'.

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hands. For this reason the sacrificer's wife was regarded as an integral part of the sacrifice. 'Wife is the hind part of the sacrifice,[1] observes S.B. 5-2-1-8.[4] The wife of the sacrificer or yajamāna had access to the sacrificial altar and had to sit within the campus of the sacrifice. A particular shed known as Prācīna-vaṃśaśālā was erected for her within the campus. An essential part of each sacrifice was called Patnī-saṃyāja wherein the wife of the sacrificer had to utter Vedic hymns and perform certain rites. The later Vedic age or the age of the Brāhmaṇas was an age of sacrifice ; sacrifice reached its heyday in that age and all Brāhmaṇical texts are liturgical or ritualistic texts bearing elaborate records of sacrificial paraphernalia. Hence it may be taken for granted that marriage was looked upon as a compulsory sacrament in that age for the three higher castes for eligibility to the performance of sacrifices.

Access of women to sacrifice.

Just as a wife was regarded as one-half of the husband likewise the husband also was looked upon as the wife's mainstay.[5] The wife had to depend on the husband for livelihood, maintenance and other necessities of day to day existence. 'Women are sure to attend upon man. Wife is to follow the husband.[6] The sweet and cordial relation between the husband and the wife finds expression in many texts of the Brāhmaṇas. The wife was never looked upon as a slave or a chattel but as a partner in religious matters, as a friend, a confidante and guide. Says A.B. 7-33-1, 'A wife is indeed a friend, a daughter is the cause of sorrow and a son is a veritable luminary like the sun in the highest heaven.'[7] The killing of a woman was strictly prohibited like the killing of a Brāhmaṇa as woman was regarded as an incarnation

Cordial relation between married couple.

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4. 'Jaghanārdho vā eṣa yajñasya yat patnī'.

5. S, B. 2-6-2-14,—'Patayo hyeva striyai pratiṣṭhā'.

6. S. B. 13-2-2-4,—'Striyaḥ puṃso 'nuvartmāno bhāvukāḥ-'

7. 'Sakhā ha jāyā, kṛpaṇaṃ ha duhitā, jyotirhi putraḥ parame vyoman.'

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of Śrī or Goddess of Grace. 'A woman is indeed the incarnation of Śrī, hence they never kill a woman.'[8] The sweet and holy relation between the husband and the wife is finely stated in S.B 12-8-2-6 ; 'Truth is male' faith is female ; mind is husband, speech is wife ; wherever the husband is, there is the wife too.'[9] Just as truth and faith go together, just as mind and speech are inseparable, likewise the relation between the married couple is indissoluble ; it is not only a temporal bond but a union of hearts, a spiritual bond that exists both here and hereafter. Mind and speech are inseparable because every speech is the external expression of a mental act which is often termed 'thinking aloud'. The A.B. clearly explains the true import of the term "jāyā". 'The husband enters into the body of the wife in the shape of embryo to which the wife becomes the mother ; thus the husband is again delivered from the womb of the wife in the tenth month putting on a new body in the shape of the son. Hence the wife is called jāyā as the husband is reborn in her.'[10] Regarding the sacred tie and indissoluble nature of the marriage sacrament a striking passage of the S.B. may be cited where a married girl, Sukanyā by name, says, —'I shall never repudiate my husband to whom my father offered me.[11]

Marriage regarded as a sacrament ; sublime thoughts connected with marriage.

The custom of the bride selecting her own husband from amongst a number of suitors, commonly known as Svayamvara system was in vogue. A.B. 4-17-1 narrates the story of the marriage of Prajāpati's daughter. 'Prajāpati wanted to give away his daughter Sūryā in marriage to the King Soma ;

Svayamvara system of marriage.

. S. B. 11-4-3-2,—'strī vā eṣā yat śrīḥ.'

9. 'Vṛṣā satyaṃ, yoṣā śraddhā, vṛṣā mano yoṣā vāk, yatraiva patistatra jāyā.'

10. A.B. 7-33-1,—

'Patirjāyāṃ praviśati garbho bhūtvā sa mātaraṃ.
Tasyāṃ punarṇavo bhutvā daśame māsi jāyate,
Tasmād jāyā jāyā bhavati yadasyāṃ jayate punaḥ.'

11. 4-1-5-9,—'Sā (sukanyā) hovāca, yasmai māṃ pitā adānnai vāhaṃ taṃ hāsyāmīti'.

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all the gods seeking her hand came to the royal court as suitors.[12] This svayamvara system proves that it was practically impossible for an immature girl who had not attained the stage of puberty to choose her own husband. Girls were given away in marriage after they had attained puberty and maturity in the later Vedic age.

Polygamy was an established fact and was countenanced in society. Sage yājñavalkya, as stated in the Bṛhadāraṇyaka-Upaniṣad, had two wives, Maitreyī and Kātyāyanī. The Maitrāyaṇī Saṃhitā records ten wives of Manu. A.B. 7-33-1 states that king Hariścandra who had no issue had a hundred wives.[13] Every king was legally allowed to have four wives or queens known as Mahiṣī, Vāvātā, Parivṛktā and Pālāgalī. All four of them were adorned with golden necklaces and various ornaments befitting queens.[14] Mahiṣī was the chief queen, the most favourite queen was called Vāvātā, the barren and hence neglected wife of the king was called Parivṛktā and the fourth wife Pālāgalī was lower than the other three in social status. It seems she was the daughter of some courtier. Thus we find polygamy was the rule of the day but polyandry was unknown and was not countenanced for the upkeep of the social order and purity of the breed. The A.B. and G.B. states in clear and unmistakable terms—'One man may have many wives but one wife must not have more than one husband.'[15] The S.B. also confirms the same—'One man may have many wives.'[16]

Polygamy was in vogue.

Polyandry was banned.

Incestuous marriages and marriages within the circle of agnates and cognates were banned. Though marriage

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12. Prajāpatir vai somāya rājñe duhitaraṃ prāyacchat sūryāṃ sāvitrīm ; tasyai sarve devā varā āgacchan.'

13. 'Hariścandro vai vaidhasa aikṣvāko rājā aputra āsa. Tasya ha śataṃ jāyā babhūbuḥ'.

14. S.B. 13-4-1-8,—'Catasro jāyā upakḷptā bhavanti Mahisī vāvātā parivṛktā Pālāgalī sarvā niṣkinyaḥ alankṛtāḥ.'

15. A.B. 3-12-12 and G.B. (U) 3-20—'Ekasya bahvyo jāyā bhavanti, na ekasyai bahavaḥ sahapatayaḥ.'

16. S.B. 9-4-1-6—'Ekasya puṃso bahvyo jāyā bhavanti.'

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within the gotra was not explicitly prohibited, marriage outside the gotra must have been the prevalent custom. An exception to the general rule is met with in S.B. 1-8-3-6 which goes to prove that marriage within the third or fourth degree on either the paternal or maternal side was in vogue or was allowed.[17] Marriage within the same caste is always praised and enjoined upon. But intercaste marriage was also prevalent in the Vedic society. Generally, in intercaste wedlocks a male of the higher caste used to marry a female of the lower caste. Thus marriages of a Brāhmaṇa male with a Kṣatriya female, that of a Kṣatriya male with a Vaiṣya female and Vaiṣya male and Śūdra female are often found in the later Vedic literature. The Smṛti texts characterise this type of marriage, i.e. marriage of a male of higher caste with a female of lower caste as Anuloma marriage. As recorded in the S.B. (4-1-5-9), the Brāhmaṇa Cyavana married the Kṣatriya girl Sukanyā who was greatly devoted to her husband as noted in the foregoing pages of this topic. Sukanyā was the daughter of king Śaryāta. Bṛhaddevatā (5-50) records the marriage of another Brāhmaṇa Śyāvāśva with the daughter of Rathavīti who was a Kṣatriya. The three wives of the king termed Mahiṣī, Vāvātā, Parivṛktā belonged to the three castes Kṣatriya, vaiśya and Śūdra respectively. Besides lawful Anuloma marriages, illicit sexual relations between men of higher castes and śūdra women are also referred to. S.B. 13-2-9-8 refers to 'śūdrā yat Āryajārā', i.e. śūdra women who is the mistress of an Aryan, i.e., man belonging to one of three higher 'castes. Such stray references and isolated rare instances are exceptions to the general rule that the standard of sexual morality was very high. Chastity of women was regarded as a priceless treasure. Rightly does V.M. Apte observe—'But all these may be looked upon rather as exceptions that prove the rule of a high standard of ordinary sexual morality..... After all, the society is human,

Intercaste marriage.

Sexual morality.

17. 'Samanādeva puruṣādattā cādyaśca jāyate idaṃ hi caturthe puruṣe tṛtīye saṃgacchāmaha iti.'

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and while we should not entertain highly exaggerated notions of unfailing chastity during the age, disproportionate importance need not be attached to isolated cases, or peculiar and exceptional customs and institutions.'[18]

Chastity in married life.

The beauty of the female form did not escape the notice of the authors of Brāhmaṇas. In certain passages we meet with poetic descriptions of the female form. The S.B.[19] and the T.B.[20] observe—'He thereby bestows on the woman beautiful form, whence the beautiful maiden is apt to become dear (to man)'. Again, comparing the shape of the sacrificial altar with the shape of woman two passages of S.B. (1-2-5-16 and 3-5-1-11) remark,—'Thus they praise the figure of a woman—broad-buttocked and thin in the middle (waist).[21]

Beauty of the female form.

The beautiful locks of the fair sex and the fashion of braiding and plaiting the same are also referred to. 'That indeed is the perfect figure of woman, to wit, fair-knotted, well-braided and fair-locked.'[22]

Art of fashioning the hair.

We shall now proceed to refer to certain manners and customs pertaining to the relationship between husband and wife. A wife did not take her food in the presence of her husband.[23] As a rule the husband used to dine in presence of the wife and the latter catered food to the former. But

Certain practices relating to the conjugal life.

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18. History & culture of the Indian people ; The Vedic Age : Book VI, Chapter XXIII.

19. S.B. 13-1-9-6—'Yoṣityeva rupaṃ dadhāti tasmād rupiṇī yuvatiḥ priyā bhāvukā.'

20. T.B. 3-8-13-2,—'Yoṣityeva rupaṃ dadhāti, tasmād strī yuvatiḥ priyā bhāvukā.'

21. 'Ṛvamiva hi yoṣāṃ praśaṃsanti pṛthuśroṇi vimṛṣṭāntarā sā madhye saṃgrāhyā'.

22. S.B. 6-5-1-10—'Ṛtadu yoṣāyai samṛddhaṃ rūpaṃ yat sukapardā sukurīrā svaupaśā samardhayati'.

23. S.B. 1-9-2-12—'Imā mānuṣyaḥ striyaḥ tira ivaiva puṃso jighatsanti'.

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there is an exception to this rule in the case of husbands desiring heroic or valiant vigorous sons. He should not eat food in the presence of his wife. She in whose presence the husband does not take food bears a vigorous son.[24] When the husband approached the wife or the wife approached the husband he or she used to anoint the person with scents and cultivate a beautiful appearance.[25] While retiring the husband is enjoined to lie on the right side of his wife.[26] The daughter-in-law used to hold the father-in-law in great esteem and never behaved like a forward lady in his presence. She evinced extreme modesty and fought shy in his presence. It seems that she did not look at his face or have any open dealings with him on account of awe and veneration. Thus we read in A.B. 3-12-1, 'The daughter-in-law used to fight shy in the presence of her father-in-law and used to conceal herself from him.'[27] The sisters of the husband used to live with him under the same roof even after his marriage and as such they had to depend a lot on their sister-in-law for happiness and maintenance. Hence remarks the A.B. with a note of sadness and sympathy—'sisters of the husband born of same parents have to depend for their livelihood on the sister-in-law who is born of different parents.[28]

Sisters of husband.

Some stray remarks are found strewn in the Brāhmaṇical texts regarding the nature of woman. 'Women are given to vain things,' i.e., things which display vanity, says the S.B.[29] In the anecdote of Pururavā and Urvaśī which gained wide celebrity and became the inexhaustible source of poetic imagination and inspiration in later ages we find

Feminine nature : vanity, inconstancy etc.

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24. S.B. 10-5-2-9—'Jāyāyā ante nāśnīyāt, vīryavantamu ha vā sā janayati yasyā ante nāśnāti'.

25. S.B. 9-4-1-4 'Yaḥ kaśca mithunamupapraiti gandhaṃ caiva sa rūpaṃ ca kāmayate'.

26. S.B. 7-5-1-6—'Dakṣiṇato vai vṛṣā yoṣāmupaśete'.

27. 'Snuṣā śvaśurāt lajjamānā nilīyamāneti'.

28. A.B. 3-13-3—'Samānodaryā svasānyodaryāyai jāyāyai anujīvinī jīvati'.

29. S.B. 3-2-4-6—'Moghasaṃhitā eva yoṣā'.

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Urvaśī making this remark to Pururavā regarding hearts of women, 'Truly there can be no friendship with women ; their hearts are the hearts of hyenas.'[30] This is, of course, with reference to inconstant ladies and women of ill reputation who are of easy virtue and fickle nature. Urvaśī herself is a heavenly nymph, a divine damsel and hence her remark applies well to her class of ladies. In general married women and unmarried damsels maintained a high standard of chastity and purity of conduct. They used to resent strongly and set at naught dark overtures of wicked men. They were morally unimpeachable. This is amply evident from a passage of the S.B. referring to such chaste ladies. 'She disdains men when they beckon her (with sinister motive).'[31]

Exceptions in case of chaste woman.

The woman or the wife used to look after household affairs. She had to do cooking, sewing, knitting, rearing up of children and the like jobs that fall to the mother's lot. 'Knitting and sewing are the duty of women.'[32] Ladies used to cultivate fine arts and in many Brāhmanical passages we come across the statement that music and dancing though practised by men, actually come under the department of women. It seems, formerly wives of Sāma-vedic priests were entrusted with the sweet singing of difficult Sāma-chants ; afterwards this task was transferred to the male priests or Udgātṛs. 'These Udgātṛs actually perform the duties of their wives (in singing Sāma-chants)', says S.B. 14-3-1-35.[33] The education of women will be discussed under 'Education', our next topic.

Duties of woman.

Cultivation of Fine arts.

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30. S.B. 11-5-1-9—'Na vai straiṇāni sakhyāni, santi sālāvṛkāṇāṃ hṛdayāni te'.

31. 3-2-1-19—'Tasmāt strī puṃsopamantritā.....asūyati'.

32. S.B. 12-7-2-11—'Tad vā etad strīṇāṃ karma yat ūrṇā-sūtraṃ karma'.

33. 'Patnīkarmaiva ete atra kurvanti yadudgātāraḥ'.

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BOOK I

CHAPTER IV

Education :

Education was compulsory for the three higher castes; after initiation ceremony or investiture with the holy thread a student had to go to the preceptor's house or forest-school to study. Only the three castes viz, Brāhmaṇa, Kṣatriya and Vaiśya were eligible for initiation and as initiation is regarded as the second birth or spiritual birth they are called Dvija or twice-born. Regarding this second birth of the initiated S.B. 11-5-4-12 remarks—'The teacher lays his right hand on the head of the pupil whereby he is impregnated by him. Within the third night the embryo issues out of the teacher and, being taught the Sāvitrī, obtains true Brahminhood.'[1] This is his spiritual regeneration, 'He is like a divine creature born from his teacher's mouth.'[2] The spiritual significance of the ceremony of Upanayana or initiation is set forth in these sayings of the S.B. "Indeed he attains a new birth who undergoes Brahmacarya.'[3] The student has to declare formally—'May I enter upon Brahmacarya', 'let me be a brahmacārī' : (S.B. 11-5-4). After initiation they were allowed to study the Vedas. Thus the Upanayana or initiation ceremony was the prelude to student-life known as Brahmacarya. The whole of S.B. 11-5-4 gives a graphic picture of the initiated student's entrance to the preceptor's residential institu-

Education compulsory for three higher castes.

Spiritual regeneration of the student.

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1. 'Ācāryo garbhī bhavati hastamādhāya dakṣiṇaṃ tṛtīyasyaṃ sa jāyate savītryā saha brāhmaṇa iti'.

2. S.B. 11-5-4—'Daivyaḥ prajāstāni mukhato janayate tata etaṃ janayate'.

3. S.B. 11-5-4-16—'Garbho vā eṣa bhavati yo brahmacaryyamupaiti'.

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tion, and the primary injunctions of the Ācārya or teacher are recorded therein. 'From to-day thou art a Brahmacārī, i.e., a student observing vows ; do your duty ; place fuel in the sacred fire ; be obedient to the teacher ; do not sleep in the day-time', are some of these injunctions.

Preliminary injunctions.

The whole of the third Brāhmaṇa of S.B. 11-3-3 deals with the rites and duties of student-life. Herein we find the germs of the detailed duties and rites of student-life met with in the Sūtra literature and Smṛti texts. The gist of this passage of S.B. runs as follows : The student approached the teacher in a submissive and humble spirit and the teacher asking his name accepted him as his pupil. The period of Brahmacarya or student-life was like a prolonged sacrifice (Dīrghasatra) ;[4] he had to study the Vedas and its accessories daily. This was called Brahma-yajña. Daily should he tend the preceptor's sacred fire by feeding it with fuels (samidh). 'Thereby he kindles his mind with fire, with holy lustre.' If the student does not fetch sacrificial faggot he forfeits a part of his longevity on that night.'[5] He had to beg alms without feeling ashamed for the same after taking his bath. He should beg alms first of the preceptor's wife and thereafter from his own mother so that he may not be refused alms in the first begging. Begging was prescribed to create a spirit of humility in the learner's mind. Observes the S.B.—'Having made himself poor, as it were, he begs alms shorn of shame' (and pride).[6] The student had to fetch fuel and place the same daily in the holy fire of the preceptor. On the completion of his study, his academic career, he placed the last fuel in that fire and took his final bath. After this bath he was called a Snātaka or graduate when he returned to his house from

Daily duties.

Begging alms.

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4. S.B. 11-3-3-2—'Dīrghasatraṃ vā eṣa upaiti yo brahmacaryamupaiti'.

5. S.B. 11-3-3-1—'Yāṃ rātriṃ brahmacārī samidhaṃ nāharati āyuṣa eva tamavadāya vasati'.

6. S.B. 11-3-3-5—'Brahmacārī ahṛīrbhūtvā bhikṣate'.

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the teacher's residential institution. This returning to parents' home was known as Samāvartana. On the day of his admission he used to place the first log of wood or samidh and on the day of Samāvartana the last log of wood in the teacher's fire-pit ; S.B. 11-3-3-2 calls the former Prāyaṇīya and the latter Udayanīya.[7] As Brahmacarya is compared to a prolonged sacrifice (Dīrghasatra), the first placing of firewood (samidh) is compared to Prāyaṇīya-iṣṭi, the last one to Udayanīya-iṣṭi or sacrifice and the intervening ones to satra or sessional sacrifice covering a long period of time.

Period of student life compared to a sacrificial session.

Names of a few students residing in the preceptor's house for study are also met with in the Brāhmaṇas. The story of Nābhānediṣṭha is an instance in point. It is narrated in A.B. 5-22-9 ; the whole of the ninth Brāhmaṇa recounts the truthfulness of Nābhānediṣṭha who became a householder on completion of his student career. The story drives home the truthfulness and honesty taught to the pupils by the teachers in ancient India. Likewise in the T.B. we come across the story of pupil Bhāradvāja.

Names of some students.

Looking after the house of the teacher and tending his cattle also formed a part of the students' duty. 'The students guard their master, his house and cattle.'[8] The C.U. (4-4-5) recounts how Satyakāma went away with his preceptor's cattle to a distant land and during his sojourn there the number of cattle increased from four hundred to a thousand. The S.A. (7-19) and the A.A. (3-1-6-3, 4) also refer to this tending of preceptor's cattle by the pupils.

Tending-the preceptor's cattle.

G.B. 11-1-2-1 to 9 contains some important passages bearing on the internal and external training during the period of Brahmacarya as follows. A Brahmacārin or student should overcome various passions, viz, sleep, lethargy, hanker-

Mandates and Taboos.

7. 'Yo brahmacaryamupaiti sa yāmupayan samidhamādhāti sā prāyaṇīyā yā snāsyan sā udayanīyā yā antareṇa satryā evāsya ta'.

8. S.B. 3-6-2-15,—'Brahmacāriṇa ācāryaṃ gopāyanti ; gṛhān paśūnnenno paharāniti'.

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ing after name and fame, anger, greed, bragging, vanity, cultivation of personal beauty, avoidance of scents, luxury, company of women, music, dancing and the like addictions that stand a bar to the intellectual, moral and spiritual progress of a student. 'He should put on antelope's skin, serve the preceptor daily ; should shake off addiction to sleep, should not hurt anyone even with angry words, must not take luxurious baths or look at a naked maiden or smell the perfume of aromatic herbs by uprooting them.'[9] He should not frequent the cremation ground. 'He should sit low, lie down on the ground, walk and move about with humility.'[10] He should not lie on a cot, should not see or take part in music or dancing ; should not spit.'[11]

Courses of study.

As regards the courses of study S.B. 11-5 gives a detailed syllabus of various subjects. The Vedic literature comprising mantra, Brāhmaṇa, Āraṇyaka, Upaniṣad and Vedāngas formed the chief subject of instruction and essential part of education. The sacred lore was handed down from generation to generation through oral transmission. The Vedic study was called Svādhyāya. It was also known as Brahmayajña.[12] One should study the Veda every day.[13] The whole of the sixth Br. of S.B. 11-5 is a glowing eulogy of the Vedic Study and contains injunctions for the same. 'The student must study the Veda daily and must utter at least one ṚK or one Yajuṣ, one Sāman, One Gāthā or one Kuṃbyā for the unbroken continuity of Brāhmayajña or the Vedic Study.'[14] Other subjects of study in which instructions were

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9. G.B. (P) 2-2-,—'Sa yanmṛgājinaṃ vaste, sa yadaharahācāryasya karma karoti, sa yat suṣupsur nidrāṃ ninayati..... tāsāṃ (oṣadhīnāṃ) punyaṃ gandhaṃ pracchidya nopajighret'.

10. G.B. (P) 2-4—'Adhaḥ śayīta, adhastiṣṭhedadho vrajet'.

11. G.B. (P) 2-7—'Noparisāyī syānna gāyamāno na nartano na niṣṭhivet'.

12. S.B. 11-5-6-3—'Svādhyāyo vai brahma-yajñaḥ'.

13. S.B. 11-5-6-3—'Aharahaḥ svādhyāyamadhīte tasmāt svādhyāyo, dhyetavyaḥ'.

14. S.B. 11-5-7-6—'Svādhyāyo' dhyetavyastasmādapi ṛcaṃ vā yajurvā sāma vā gāthāṃ kuṃbyaṃ vābhivyāharet vratasyāvacchedāya'.

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offered are mentioned in the S.B. Among the items of study were included precepts (Anuśāsanāni) or Vedāngas, the sciences (Vidyāḥ), the dialogue (Vākovākyam), traditional myths and legends (Itihāsa-purāṇa) and Nārāśaṃśī-Gāthās.[15] Sāyana while commenting on this passage takes 'Anuśāsanāni' to mean six Vedāngas, 'Vidyā' in the sense of philosophical systems such as Nyāya, Mīmāṃsā etc., 'Vākovākyam' to mean theological discourses or disputations, 'Itihāsa-purāṇam in the sense of cosmological myths and accounts of kings etc., and Gāthā Nārāśaṃśī in the sense of stanzas or verses recounting deeds of human beings. Eggeling takes the term 'Vidyā' in a wider sense that comprises such special sciences as the science of snakes (sarpa-vidyā), Viṣa-vidyā etc.[16] S.B. 13-4-3 refers to Sarpavidyā, (seience of serpents), Rakṣovidyā (demonology) and Asura-vidyā (magic trick). The courses of study gradually swelled in bulk with the inclusion of new subjects. This fact is amply borne out by C.U. 7-1-2, where Nārada gives an exhaustive list of the subjects he has studied to his preceptor Sanatkumāra. The list comprises the R.V., the Y.V., S.V., Atharvan, Itihāsa-purāṇa the Veda of the Vedas (Vedānāṃ Vedam), rituals concerning the worship of the manes (Pitrya), the science of numbers or Arithmetic (Rāśi), the science of portents (Daiva), science of divination (Nidhi), art of debate and theological disputation (Vākovākyam), code of conduct (Ekāyanam), knowledge relating to gods (Deva-vidyā), Brahma-vidyā, the science of Biology or existence (Bhūta-vidyā), the science of politics or govt. (Kṣatra-vidyā), astronomy (Nakṣatra-vidyā), the study of Serpents and toxicology (Sarpavidyā) and Devajanavidyā. Śankara commenting on this passage explains 'Vedānāṃ Vedam' as the grammar (Vyākaraṇam), and Brahma-vidyā as the study of Vedāngas, of Śikṣā (phonetics) Kalpa and Chandas (prosody). The term 'Devajanavidyā' is taken by Śaṇkara to mean the arts of perfume-making, dancing and music, both vocal and instrumental. Some scholars like Ranga Rāmā-

Exhaustive syllabus of the later Vedic age.

15. S.B. 11-5-6-8—'Anuśāsanāni vidyā vākovākyamitihāsapurāṇaṃ gāthā-nārāśaṃsyaḥ'.

16 Eggeling's edition of the S.B.

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nuja split up the word into 'Deva-vidyā' and 'Jana-vidyā', the former standing for music and dance, and the latter for the science of medicine (Āyurveda).

Educational Dabates, Discourses and Conferences.

Debates, discourses and conferences were often held on educational or sacrificial topics. Debates were called 'Brahmodya' which in classical Sanskrit literature came to be known as 'Vidyā-vivāda' or 'Vidyā-vicāra' as we find in Kādamvarī and the like works. Questions and cross-questions were put in a dabate by the contending candidates and there was a judge or board of judges. The V.S. and the T.B. call the questioner 'Praśnin' and the cross-questioner 'Abhipraśnin'. Some scholars are led to think that the term 'Vākovākyam' originally meant this debate which consisted of words and counterwords in the shape of dialogue. The germ of logic or Nyāyaśāstra can be traced in this system of debate. Debating competitions were a regular feature of academic career. Not only students, teachers who were eminent scholars and sages also launched on debating bouts with zeal and seriousness. Forest-universities, royal courts and sites of grand sacrifices became seats of learning and witnessed many educational conferences, theological discourses and debating competitions. The S.B. records many debating bouts, and theological and liturgical discourses. King Janaka of Videha was a great patron of learning and his court became a renowned seat of learning where frequent debates and disputations were held over which the king declared handsome prizes as the palm of victory. Thus in the S.B. we hear of debate between sage Yājñavalkya and Śākalya regarding the number of gods (11-6-3), between Uddālaka Āruṇi and Sauceya Pracīnā-yogya (11-5-3-1), between the teacher Śāṇḍilya and his pupil Sāptarathavāhana, theological disputation between the Hotṛ and Adhvaryu (13-5-2-11), theological questions and repartees between the different priests in the horse sacrifice (13-5-2). In S.B. 11-6-25 we find brahmins challenging Janaka to a debate and Yājñavalkya's rejoinder. An interesting account of a debating bout is recorded in S.B. 11-4-1-1

Various debating bouts recorded in the S.B.

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wherefrom we know that there existed the custom of flinging a gold coin as the challenge to a debate. A Brahmin youth of Kurupañcāla country, Uddālaka by name went to the north where he flung a gold coin as the prize for a debate. The people of the northern region were afraid of him ; they accepted the challenge and put up Svaidāyana Śaunaka, son of Gautama, as their spokesman to take up the gauntlet and champion their cause. In the bout Uddālaka was defeated by Śaunaka ; hence the former offered the gold coin to him and became his pupil to study at his feet. These were the beginnings of debates and discourses which had their culmination in the Upaniṣadic age when the court of King Janaka became a celebrated seat of learning and of famous theological and spiritual discourses and disputations. The debates and disputations between the erudite scholar sage Yājñavalkya and the seers and Gārgī constitute one immortal and unforgettable chapter of India's sacred lore.

Snātaka.

On completion of his study a student was called Snātaka because he used to take his last bath in the residence of the preceptor on the day of returning to his paternal home. This coming back to his home was termed Samāvartana. Hence the graduates are called Snātaka till to-day and the convocation ceremony Samāvartana Utsaba. The convocation address delivered by the preceptor on the completion of academic career to the students in the Vedic age is recorded in the T.U. which is an eternal message to students irrespective of time and clime.

Samāvartana or convocation ceremony.

The origin of the term 'Snātaka' may be inferred from such passages of the Brs as—'One should not beg any more after the last bath ;[17] . That is to say, begging was prohibited for the householder, and the injunction was judicious and logical considering the economic set-up of the society. 'Snātvā' means 'after taking the bath'. Evidently it means

17. S.B. 11-3-1-7—'Na ha vai snātvā bhikṣeta'.

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the final ablution on the day of leaving the institution. He who took this final bath was called a Snātaka. The Snātakas went also by the name of Upakurvāṇa Brahmacārins as distinct from the Naiṣṭhika Brahmacārins who observed permanent celibacy and resided for good in the preceptor's house. 'After the final ablution, i.e., after graduation, a student who had observed the vow of brahmacarya shone forth resplendent with the halo of learning and wisdom just as fire blazes forth when fed with fuel.'[18]

Two classes of Brahmacārins.

It is enjoined that 'while receiving lessons from the teacher, the student should sit in front of the teacher facing him towards the west, the teacher faces the east.'[19]

Mention has already been made of teachers of residential institutions where students had to go for study and spiritual and secular training after the Upanayana ceremony. These teachers were either celibates or married. They were rooted to their institutions. Besides these there was a class of wandering teachers or peripatetic scholars who moved from place to place and imparted learning to the seekers. They were called Carakas from the root 'car' to wander. S.B. 4-2-4-1 refers to such wandering teachers.[20]. These peripatetic teachers fulfilled a great need of the society as important medium for propagation of learning and culture, carrying wisdom wherever they went. They were like mobile schools of learning, easily available and accessible. They educated the mass and helped the cause of education campaign.

Two types of teachers.

Carakas or Peripatetic Teachers.

As a rule preceptors or ācāryas did not accept any monthly tuition fees from the pupils; education was

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18. S.B. 11-3-1-7—'Yathā ha vā agniḥ samiddho rocate evaṃ ha vai sa snātvā rocate ya evaṃ vidvān brahmacaryyaṃ carati'.

19. S.B. 11-5-4-14—'Purastādeva pratīceḥ samīkṣamāṇāyānuvrūyāt'.

20. 'Sa yadi taṃ carakebhyo vā yato vā'nuvrūvīta'.

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imparted free of any cost. The parents had not to pay a farthing for the education of their children. The students begged (cooked) food from the neighbouring villages and subsisted on the same. The preceptors who did not accept any remuneration and rendered honorary service were termed 'Śrotriyā apratigrāhakāḥ' (S.B. 13-4-3-14), i.e. honorary teachers versed in the sacred lore.

Education imparted free of cost.

Though there is no explicit mention about the arrangements to impart education to women it can be taken for granted that education was not denied to them. From the large number of educated ladies mentioned in the Vedic literature we can rightly infer that women also underwent some sort of training under the able guidance of competent teachers who might have been their fathers, brothers, husbands or near relations. The pure Brāhmanical texts mention some female scholars whereas names of many learned women who could hold their own against male scholars appear in the Saṃhitā-portion and Upaniṣad portion of the Veda. Several female seers are mentioned in the R.V. to whom some Vedic hymns were revealed such as Ghoṣā, Ambhṛṇī Vāk, Viśva-vārā, Romaśā, Lopāmudrā, Apālā, etc. The Upaniṣads record the names of women savants like Gārgī etc., and spiritually enlightened ladies like Maitreyī etc. Parents longed for the birth not only of learned sons but also of learned daughters. The B.U. observes—'If anyone desires that a learned daughter be born unto him,[21] he should cook a particular recipe and feed his wife with it.

Education of women.

Names of learned women.

In A.B. 5-25-4 we come across a learned maiden obsessed with a Gandharva (Gandharva-gṛhitā Kumārī) pointing out

21. 'Atha ya icchet duhitā me paṇḍitā jāyeta'.

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the defects in the time-schedule of the Agnihotra sacrifice. She says—'I shall complain to the manes that the Agnihotra which was performed in two days formerly is now performed in one day.'[22] The wife of the sacrificer had to utter Vedic mantras during the performance of sacrifice. Though the mantras were muttered in a very low inaudible voice (Upāṃśu) she had to learn and master the hymns and utter the same. Under 'sacraments' in Book III it has been clearly proved that women of the higher castes were invested with the holy thread, uttered Sāvitrī and had access to Vedic study in the Vedic age. The gṛhyasūtras also mention the names of women, savants e.g., the A.G.S. mentions Vaḍavā Prātitheyī as a great scholar.

Instances of female savants.

Upanayana and Vedic Study were open to women.

Fine arts such as vocal music, instrumental music and dancing were cultivated by ladies, and Brs. often mention that singing and dancing were woman's pastimes and not man's (nṛttaṃ gītaṃ strīṇāṃ karma). It seems women, i.e., wives of Sāmavedic priests (Udgātṛs) were formerly entrusted with the singing of Sāma-chants in sacrifices; later on they were supplanted by their husbands. S.B. 14-3-1-35 states—'The Udgātṛs actually perform the duties of their wives (in singing Sāma-chants).[23]

Cultivation of fine arts by both the sexes.

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22. 'Vaktāsmo vā idaṃ pitṛbhyo yad vaitadagnihotramubhayedyurahūya-tānyedyurvāva tadetarhi hūyata iti'.

23. 'Patnī-karmaiva ete atra kurvanti yadudgātāraḥ' (sāma gāyanti).

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CHAPTER V

Music and Dance :

Music, both vocal and instrumental was in vogue. The Sāma-vedic priest Udgātṛ used to sing Sāma-chants to please the deities who were invoked in the sacrifices. The intricate process of Sāma-chant bespeaks the high standard attained by Indian music in the Vedic age. Seven notes trace their origin in the Sāma-chant. The seers of the Bṛāhmaṇa literature like the seers of Saṃhitā literature had a keen ear for music. They tried to catch the musical element in the sounds of nature. Thus the S.B. remarks—'When it rains hard, a (musical) sound as that of the Sāma-chant is heard'.[1] Vīṇā (lute) and Dundubhi (drum) are often mentioned. The lute was looked upon as a graceful and sacred instrument ; it was identified with Śrī or Grace. 'When a man attains grace (Śrī) lutes are played in his honour ; Brahmins sing in accompaniment to lute for a year.'[2] 'Vīnā is an embodiment of grace.'[3] Sometimes Sāmans were chanted accompanied by the beating of drums. 'He sings Sāman in accompaniment to the sound of drums.'[4] One who used to sing in accompaniment to lute was called Vīṇāgāthī. Sometimes many lutes were attuned and played on simultaneously giving rise to a chorus of lutes. Masters conducting such chorus of lutes were called Vīṇā-gaṇagina. We find this

Vocal and instrumental music widely practised.

Eulogy of Lute.

Drums.

Chorus of lutes (Vīṇā).

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1. 11-2-7-32—'Yadā valavad varṣati sāma ivopabdiṃ kriyate'.
2. S.B. 13-1-5-3—'Yadā vai puruṣaḥ śriyaṃ gacchati vīṇāsmai vādyate, brāhmanau vīṇāgāthinau saṃvatsaraṃ gāyataḥ.'
3. 'Śriyai vā etadrūpaṃ yad vīnā'.
4. S.B. 5-1-5-17—'Dundubhīnabhi sāma gāyati'.

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term in S.B. 13-4-3-3. Song is also mentioned as the principal means of livelihood of some persons. It was not a compulsory rule that one would have to sing traditional songs ; a singer was given the option to compose songs and sing the same. In S.B. 13-4-2-8 we find a Brāhmaṇa singing songs composed by himself. 'A Brāhmaṇa lute-player sings three strophes composed by himself, striking up the Uttaramandrā tune.'[5] The term Uttaramandrā may be construed either with the lute or with the tune. Eggeling observes—'literally, the upper deep one, i.e., perhaps one the chords of which are pitched in the upper notes of the lower key.'[6] In certain sacrifices and during horse-races or chariot-races drums were beat. In the sacrifice known as Vājapeya seventeen drums used to be beaten simultaneously as recorded in S.B. 5-1-5-6.[7] In horse-race and chariot-race the rhythmic sound of drums kept time with the cadence of running horses or chariots.

Composition of songs.

Seventeen drums accompany horse-races and chariot-races.

Dancing was practised by both men and women. The terms 'Nṛttam', 'Nartanam', are met with in both the S.B. and A.B. The rhythmic movements of a dance are referred to in A.B. 5-22-10 which reads as follows :—'Days and nights rotate and follow each other in a regular rhythmic manner like dancing.'[8] This passage lends support to the view that there were prescribed rules for dancing in the Vedic age. S.B. 3-2-46 refers to both singing and dancing. When the goddess Vāk was sent by gods to dupe the Gandharvas and fetch Soma which was confiscated by the Gandharvas, she (Vāk) began to dance and sing to please the demi-gods or Gandharvas.[9] She deluded the Gandharvas with her song and dance, and cajoled Soma out of their hands.

Dance.

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5. 'Brāhmaṇo vīṇāgāthī dakṣiṇata uttaramandrāmudā-ghnastisraḥ svayam-sambhṛtā gāthā gāyatītyayajata'.

6. Eggeling's note on the text concerned in his translation of the S.B.

7. 'Atha saptadaśa dundubhīnanuvedyantaṃ saminvanti'.

8. 'Pratipadasca ahaśceti punarāvṛttam punarninṛttam'.

9. 'Yā (vāk) nṛttaṃ gītamupāvavarta.'

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Games & Sports :

Horse-race and chariot-race were very popular sports widely enjoyed by the people. Even gods indulged in these games. A.B. 2-9-1 recounts the story of horse-racing competition amongst the gods. Once there was a dispute amongst the gods as to who should drink Soma first. All the gods began to clamour and contend for that honour. Then they decided to hold a horse-race competition and all agreed that he who would stand first in that competition should have the proud privilege to drink Soma first. The god of wind, Vāyu, stood first, Indra second, Mitra and Varuṇa third and the Aśvins stood fourth in that competition. Horse-race was called 'Āji-dhāvana'. S.B. 5-1-1-3 also refers to a chariot-race held amongst the gods to settle a dispute regarding priority. In the sacrifice known as Vājapeya chariot-race was a usual feature. There was a winning post called Kāṣṭhā in horse-race and chariot-race. Beating of drums or bands always accompanied these racing competitions.[10]

Horse-race and Chariot-race.

Since the ṚgVedic age Dice-play was a very popular indoor game of the Aryans. In the ṚgVeda it is called Akṣa. Gambling was prevalent both in the Vedic and later Vedic age. Vedic hymns denouncing gambling are often met with. The four point was called Kṛta in Dice-play and S.B. 13-3-2-1 makes mention of this Kṛta.[11] In the sacrifice known as Rājasūya a game of dice was compulsory. There was a superintendent of gambling appointed by the king called 'Akṣāvāpa'; it was his duty to mark the gambling ground for the game of dice in the Rājasūya sacrifice.

Dice (Akṣa).

Gambling.

From the Saṃhitā or Brāhmaṇa texts it is not clear as to how the game was played. Sāyaṇa, while commenting on

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10. S.B. 5-1-5-17—'Dhāvanti ājimāghnanti dnndubhīnabhi sāma gāyati.'

11. 'Catuṣṭomena kṛtena.'

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S.B. 5-4-4-6 remarks that the dice used in the Rājasūya sacrifice were made of gold shells cowries or of gold belleric myroballan (Vibhītaka) nuts. The ṚgVeda also testifies to the fact that Vibhītaka nuts were used as dice. It seems the dice were marked with dots ; eye is called Akṣa and dice was termed Akṣa perhaps for the eye-like dots. The game was played with five dice, four of which were called Kṛta, whilst the fifth was called Kali. If all the dice when thrown fell uniformly, i.e., with dotted sides either upward or downward then that throw was declared as the winning throw.

Origin of drama.

Origins of drama may be traced in the Br. texts as in the dialogue hymns of Sūrya and Sūrya, Saramā and Pani etc., of the Saṃhitās. The fine dialogue between king Pururavā and the heavenly nymph Urvaśī narrated in S.B. 11-5-1 is highly dramatic in character. In S.B. 11-6-1 we find a concrete presentation of abstract attributes by way of allegory. There Reverence or Śraddhā is represented as a beautiful and graceful lady whereas Wrath or Krodha is represented as a terrific figure—an ugly man of dark complexion with yellow eyes and repulsive features. The beginnings of allegorical play may be traced here which culminated in such allegorical plays as Prabodha-candrodaya etc., in the classical age. The term 'Śailūṣa' meaning an actor occurs in the Puruṣamedha chapter (30-6) of the V.S. ('Nṛttāya sūtaṃ gītāya śailūṣam).

Dress & Decorations :

Garments made of cotton, silk, wool etc.

Garments made of wool, cotton and silk were worn by the people. Cotton and wool, sewing and knitting are often referred to. The term 'sūtra' refers to cotton and 'ūrṇā' to wool which was made of sheep's hair. The general dress consisted of three parts—the main portion fitting the body called vāsa, an outer or over-garment called Adhi-vāsa and an under-garment named Nīvi. The outer garment served the purpose of a cloak or mantle. Sewing and knitting were the tasks of women. 'It is the duty

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of women to knit and sew or stitch.'[12] Warp, woof and different aspects of weaving are referred to in S.B. 3-1-2-18. People had a fondness for good dress and wanted to be well clad. Hence the terms Suvāsā (well-clad) and suvāsa (good garment) occur frequently in the S.B., A.B. etc. The importance of garment as bespeaking a men's taste, and position in society is finely expressed in S.B. 13-4-1-15; "Garment is man's outward appearance, whence people on seeing a well-clad man, asks, 'who can this be ?' For he is perfect in his outward appearance."[13] Vedic Aryans had a great fascination for cloth with finely embroidered borders or interlaced with golden and silver threads. 'When a cloth is woven it is embroidered (at the border) before the actual texture is woven; it is embroidered in the middle and again it is embroidered at the end', says A.B. 2-11-10.[14] The term 'Peśa' occurring repeatedly in this passage means ornamentation or embroidery.

General dress.

Fondness for good dress.

Embroidery.

Special garments were prescribed for the priests performing sacrifice. Skirts made of Kuśa grass were used in certain sacrifices. From the S.B. we learn that the sacrificial garment consisted of a garment of pure wool not dyed, an undergarment made of silk called tārpya, an outer garment like Adhivāsa and a head-dress or turban (Uṣṇīṣa). Head-dresses or turbans were worn by the Kings during their coronation ceremony in particular. Even queens had to put on turbans. Indra's queen Indrāṇī had a most variegated (multi-coloured and embroidered) head-band, says S.B. 14-2-1-8.[15]

Priestly garment.

Dress during sacrificial performance.

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12. S. B. 12-7-2-11—Tad vā etat strīṇaṃ karma yadūrṇāsūtram karma.'

13. 'Rūpaṃ vā etat puruṣasya yad vāsastasmād yameva kañca suvāsasamāhuḥ ko' nvayamiti rūpasamṛddho hi bhavati'

14. 'Pravayaṇataḥ peśaḥ kuryāt.....yathaiva madhyataḥ peśaḥ kuryat.....yathaivāvapra-jjanataḥ peśaḥ kuryāt.'

15. 'Indrāṇī ha vā Indrasya priyā patnī tasya uṣṇīṣo viśvarūpatamaḥ.'

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Sages, mendicants and Brahmacārins used to put on garment made of hides of black antelope (kṛṣṇājina).

Dress for students and sages.

Because antelope skin was the garment of Brahmacārins, sometimes they are referred to simply by the term 'Ajina' which stood for Brahmacarya or student life—the first order of a man's life. Thus A.B. 7-33-1 refers to the order of Brahmacarya by the term 'Ajina' only.

Animal hide as dress.

Even female ascetics used to put on garments of black antelope skin and this custom obtained in the epic age too as we gather from the description of the female ascetic called Śabarī in the Rāmāyana as 'Kṛṣṇājināmbaradharā', i.e. one putting on garment made of black deer skin.

The S.B. refers to armours made of iron (3-4-4-23), armours made of silver (3-4-4-24) and those of gold (3-4-4-25).

Various Armours.

We hear of cushions for seats fashioned with gold threads called 'Hiraṇya-Kaśipu' and 'Hiraṇya-Kūrca' in S.B. 13-4-3-1. A.B. 7-33-6 also mentions this Hiraṇya-Kaśipu in the same sense.

Beautiful cushions.

An arm chair with head-cushion (āsandī sopavarhaṇā) is mentioned in S.B. 13-8-4-10. Mats made of twigs of Plakṣa tree (Ficus infectoria) were in use. From the description of Coronation Ceremony recorded in the A.B. it is learnt that a tiger-skin was placed on the throne. Bed-covers called Āstaraṇas and pillows are mentioned in A.B. 8-38-1.

Ornaments :—Ornaments of gold and silver were in vogue and ladies belonging to both middle class and high class used to put them on. S.B. 12-8-3-11 mentions gold and silver ornaments. The nobles used ornaments of gold invariably; they disliked ornaments of silver, brass or iron. Hence it is said—'gold is a symbol of noble rank.'[16] Four wives of the king used to wear gold ornaments, gold neck-

Various kinds of ornaments.

16. S.B. 13-2-2-18—'Kṣatrasya etad rūpaṃ yad hiraṇyam.'

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bands or necklaces.'[17] The mention of necklaces made of pearl, hundred and one pearls in S.B. 13-2-6-8 goes to prove that Vedic Aryans knew the use of pearls and fashioned ornaments out of them. Not to speak of gold ornaments, gold bricks, gold plates and gold shavings or gold chips were also used as we gather from S.B. 6-1-2-30.[18]

17- S.B. 13-4-1-8—'Mahiṣī vāvātā parivṛktā pālāgalī sarvā niṣkiṇyaḥ alankṛtāḥ.'

18. 'Yad rukma-puruṣa upadadhāti yad hiraṇyaśakalaiḥ prokṣati sā hiraṇyeṣṭakā,'

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CHAPTER VI

Food & Drink :

In the Brāhmaṇas many items of food have been mentioned, some meant for human consumption and some for offering as oblations to gods in sacrifice. Rice and Wheat were principal food. Various products of rice were used. A.B. 2-8-5 mentions Dhānā, Karambha, Parivāpa, Purodāśa and Payasyā. These were different products of barley and rice. Fried barley cooked with butter was called Dhānā. The powder of Dhānā, again, fried with butter was called Karambha. Parivāpa was produced from parched rice fried in butter. Rice-cake was termed Purodāśa. Payasyā was curd and milk blended together. S.B. 12-7-2-9 refers to malted rice (saṣpāni) and malted barley (Tokmāni). The S.B. mentions rice-gruel or yavāgu as a food. T.B. 3-8-15 mentions Pṛthukā, Saktu, Lāja, Dhānā, Masūsya and Karambha as different products of rice. According to Sāyaṇa Pṛthukā means flattened rice also called 'Chipitaka' ; Saktu is the powder of fried rice ; Lāja is puffed rice and looks like white flower. Hence Sāyaṇa poetically states, 'Lājā brīhiprabhavāḥ puṣpavad vikaśitāḥ', i.e., 'Lājas are products of paddy and look like blooming flowers'. Dhānā means both fried rice and fried barley. Masūsya is a famous paddy that grew in north India (Uttaradeśe prasiddhā dhānyaviśeṣāḥ). Karambha is explained as fried rice and barley mixed with butter. The said passage of the T.B. also mentions 'Priyangu-taṇḍula', which, according to Sāyaṇa, means a particular variety of paddy which is golden in colour.

Various food-grains.

Different products of rice.

Various products of milk are mentioned such as Dugdha, Payas (milk), Ājya (melted butter), Āmikṣā

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(curdled milk), Dadhi (curd), Vājin (whey), Karambha (Porridge), Ghṛta (unmelted butter), Navanīta (cream or fresh butter), Sānnāyya (curd and milk mixed together), mixture of milk and Soma (S.B. 1-6-4-6), Caru (milk, curd, honey, butter etc., blended together), Śrita (boiled milk), Śara (thickened surface of the milk), etc.

Different products of milk.

Among fruits the T.B., S.B., and A.B., K.B., etc., mention sacrificial figs or Udumvara, sugarcane (S.B. 3-4-1-18), berries and jujubes. S.B. 5-2-2-2- is a glowing eulogy of sacrificial figs and S.B. 5-5-4-10 refers to three kinds of plum or jujube called Kuvala, Karkandhu and Badara. A.B. 7-35-4 mentions shoots of Banyan tree and fruits of fig, Plakṣa (Ficus infectoria) and Aśvattha (Ficus religiosa) trees as fit food for Kṣatriyas (the military or ruling class).'[1] The A.B. further states—'Soma is the food for Brāhmaṇas, curd for Vaiśyas and water for Śūdras.'[2]

Fruits.

Meat was widely used as food. The fleshes of sterile cow, ox, goat and sheep were favourite items of food. There is no denying the fact that beef was an item of food in the Vedic age. Without beef even Śrāddha ceremony could not be performed: Māṃsāṣṭakā, an essential part of Śrāddha ceremony, had to be performed with the flesh of ox. S.B. 3-4-1-2 states in clear and unmistakable terms—'A large ox or he-goat is to be slaughtered when the king or a Brāhmaṇa comes to the house as guest.'[3] A.B. 1-3-4 also observes in the same strain that an ox or a sterile cow had to be slaughtered when a king or any venerable person became a guest.[4] Sage Yājñavalkya says in S.B. 3-1-2-21, 'I,

Meat.

Beef, mutton, goat's flesh etc.

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1. 'Athāsya svo bhakṣyo nyagrodhasyāvarodhaśca phalāni caudumvarāṇi āśvatthāni plākṣāni.'

2. A.B. 7-35-3,—'Somo Brāhmaṇānāṃ sa bhakṣaḥ', 'Dadhi vaiśyānāṃ sa bhakṣaḥ', 'Apaḥ Śūdrāṇāṃ sa bhakṣaḥ.'

3. 'Rājñe vā brāhmaṇāya vā mahokṣaṃ vā mahājam vā pacet.'

4. 'Manuṣyarāje āgate' nyasmin vā arhati ukṣāṇaṃ vā vehataṃ vā kṣadantaḥ.'

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for one, eat it (beef), provided it is tender (and not tough).[5] S.B. 1-6-4-3 refers to flesh of goat and S.B. 7-5-2-42 mentions flesh of cattle as food for human consumption. Among all kinds of eatables 'flesh or meat is the best kind of food', observes S.B. 11-7-2-1.[6]

Flesh as the best food.

Now we come to the discussion of the drinks. Almost all the Brs. mention Soma, Surā, honey, milk and water as items of drink along with fruit juice. Soma was a hieratic drink. Whether Soma was an intoxicant or not is still an unsolved problem but the majority of scholars holds the view that it was not an intoxicant. It was a very rare creeper available in inaccessible mountains of northern and north-western India and on account of its rarity substitutes have been prescribed like the herb Pūtikā and the like. It was a hieratic drink. In the Br. texts Soma is always eulogised whereas Surā or spirituous liquor is always denounced. Drawing a comparison between the two, the S.B. remarks, 'Soma is truth, prosperity and light; Surā is untruth, misery or vice and darkness.'[7] A Brāhmaṇa is enjoined not to drink Surā (wine) because it is unpropitious for him.[8] The ill effects of wine drinking are also narrated in the S.B. 'By drinking wine (Surā) one becomes violent in temper'.[9] The T.B. calls Soma the best drink for gods and Surā the best drink for human being.[10] There were various processes of preparing 'surā'. It was prepared from Oṣadhi herbs or medicinal herbs that wither away after producing fruits,

Drinks.

Soma & surā differentiated.

Wine denounced.

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5. 'Hovāca yājñavalkyo' śnāmi evāhamaṃsalaṃ cet bhavatīti.'
6. 'Ẹtadu paramamannādyaṃ yanmāṃsam.'
7. 5-1-2-10—'Satyaṃ śrīrjyotiḥ somaḥ anṛtaṃ pāpmā tamaḥ surā.'
8. S.B. 12-8-1-5—'Āśiva iva vā eṣa bhakṣo yat surā brāhmaṇasya.'
9. 12-7-3-20—'Surāṃ pītvā raudramanā.'
10. 1-3-3-3—'Ẹtad vai devānāṃ paramamannaṃ yat somaḥ. Ẹtanmanuṣyānāṃ yat surā.'

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and water mixed together.[11] It was also prepared from fermented rice.[12] The T.B. compares 'Soma' with men and 'Surā' with women to show the superiority of the former to the latter.[13] Another kind of drink, an immature spirituous liquor called Parisrut is mentioned in the S.B. It is neither Soma nor surā.[14], but a halfway house between the two. Wine or surā was prepared by fermenting grains and herbs.

Surā and Parisrut.

Full fermentation was allowed in the case of Surā but not in the case of Parisrut ; hence the latter is called semi-fermented or immature spirituous liquor. Like Surā, Parisrut is also denounced and a Brāhmaṇa is forbidden to drink Parisrut.[15]

Regarding the quantity of food to be taken, the S.B. observes,—'Food which is proportionate to the body satisfies and does not injure it ; but when there is too much, it does injure it, and when there is too little, it does not satisfy.[16] Food must not be too much or too little but proportionate to our body so that it may sustain and nourish our life.

Quantity of Food.

11. S.B. 12-8-1-4—'Apāṃ ca vā eṣa oṣadhīnāṃ ca raso yat surā.'

12. A.B. 8-8—'Yat surā bhavati kṣatrarūpaṃ tadatho annasya rasaḥ.' T.B. 1-3-2-6,—'Yadannasya śamalamāsīt sā surā.'

13. 1-3-3-4—'Pumān vai somaḥ strī surā.'

14, S.B. 5-1-2-14—'Naisa soma na surā yat parisrut.'

15. S.B. 12-9-1-1—'Anādyau vai brāhmaṇena parisrut.'

16. 10-4-1-4,—'Yadu vā ātmasammitamannaṃ tadavati tanna hinasti, yad bhūyo hinasti tad yat kanīyo na tadavati.'

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CHAPTER VII

Utensils & Tools :

Various utensils and tools have been mentioned in the A.B. and S.B. Some of these were used for household purpose and some for the performance of sacrifice. The S.B., mentions leathern bag (Kumbhī bhastrā 1-1-2-7), wooden jar (1-1-2-8), strainer (Pavitra, 1-1-3-1), mortar (Adri 1-1-4-6), mortar and pestle (ulūkhala-musala 1-1-4-7), wooden sword (sphya), winnowing basket (Śūrpa, 1-1-4-8), shovel and hoe (upaveśa, 1-2-1-3), iron bowl (13-3-4-5), plate (śarāva), pot (kumbhī) and the like utensils. Mortar and pestle were used to husk paddy and wheat ; hence the S.B. states—'Food is prepared by the mortar and the pestle.[1] The strainer was called Pavitra or Daśā-pavitra, which was made of goat's hair and sheep's wool. 'Daśā' means border ; as the strainer was bordered on both ends it was called Daśā-pavitra. Various types of ladles made of the holy fig tree wood were used in sacrifice such as Juhu, Sruk, Upabhṛt, Dhrubā, Upayamanī, Darvī, etc.

Various utensils.

Various ladles.

In the Aśvamedha three kinds of needles were used made of copper, silver and gold respectively.[2] From the evidence of S.B. 13-2-2-16 we know that three kinds of knives made of copper, iron and gold were used in the Aśvamedha.[3] Wooden bowls made of Aśvattha, Fig and Banyan wood were in use.

Needles.

Knives.

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1. 7-5-1-12—'Ulūkhala-musalābhyāṃ hyevānnaṃ kriyate.'
2. S.B. 13-2-10-3—'Trayya sūcyo bhavanti, lohamayyo rajatā hiraṇyāḥ.'
3. S.B. 13-2-2-16—'Hiraṇyayo' śvasya śāso bhavati. Lohamayāḥ paryaṅgānām, āyasā itareṣām.'

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Jars, chairs etc.

The A.B. refers to big earthern jars called Mahāvīra (1-4-2), chairs (Āsandī) made of fig wood (8-37-1), bell-metal utensils (8-37-4). Oven (ukhā) and the process of preparing an oven are mentioned in S.B. 6-5-1-6. The oven was made of clay mixed with sand of gravel, stone and iron dust.

Wine-goblet or surā kaṃsam is mentioned in A.B. 7-35-4.

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CHAPTER VIII

Medicine :

The terms Bhiṣak, Bheṣaj, Bheṣajyati meaning physician, medicine and treatment respectively abound in the Brs. The twin gods Aśvins were regarded as the physicians of the gods.[1] Nature-cure was the main treatment in the Vedic age, i.e., treatment with the aid of natural elements like water, air, heat and earth. 'Within water is medicine.'[2] 'Fire or heat, says A.B. 1-5-2 'is the medicine to restore life.'[3] Soma is regarded as the king of creepers and medicinal plants. S.B. 3-1-3-7 refers to ointment for sores and itches. Vedic Aryans were fully conversant with the fact that contact with sun-rays infuses medicinal or healing power in water. A.B. 8-37-4 makes a noteworthy observation—'Rain-water charged with the rays of the sun is a medicinal or potent drink.'[4] The Vedic fathers had a clear knowledge of toxicology and knew that sour things like tamarind, curd and the like neutralise the ill effect or stupor caused by intoxicating drinks and drugs. Thus A.B. 2-8-4 records how the gods Mitra and Varuṇa neutralised the intoxicating effect of intoxicants with curd.

References to medicine and treatment.

Healing power of natural elements.

Effect of sun-rays ; heliopathy.

Anti-intoxicants.

The term Bhiṣak and its derivatives are often used figuratively. Thus Brahmā is called the physician of the

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1. S.B. 12-7-2-3 & A. B. 1-4-1,—'Aśvinau vai devānāṃ bhiṣajau.'
2. S.B, 5-1-4-6,—'Apsu bheṣajam.'
3. 'Devo (agniḥ) jīvātave kṛtaḥ.'
4. 'Atha yadātapavarṣyā āpo bhavanti tejaśca ha vai brahmavarcasam.'

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sacrifice ;[5] he treats sacrifice to make it whole. The goddess of speech or Sarasvatī was looked upon as a medicine or treatment for defective speech. We read in the S.B., 'gods said to Sarasvatī, thou art healing medicine.'[6] Likewise Dakṣiṇā or gift in sacrifice is called a healing balm or medicine.[7]

Figurative application of the term 'Bhiṣak'.

The wonderful knowledge of anatomy of the Vedic Aryans is finely displayed in the description and minute details of the different organs of the animal sacrificed in Paśu-yāga in S.B. 3-8-2 and 3-8-3. Every limb and every external and internal part of the organism is mentioned therein including fat, liver, omentum, pancreas, lungs, details of the cardiac region, pubic region, sacrum, spinal column and the like. S.B. 11-4-1-5 gives a detailed description of all the teeth—upper row, lower row, molar, incisor and frontal ones. It was also known to the ancient seers that the bones of fat persons and lean persons do not vary though their external appearances, their bulk vary widely. 'Bones of a fat person and a lean person are alike.'[8] This observation and similar remarks throw sufficient light on the knowledge of osteology of the ancients. Observations on the growth of the foetus in the embryo are also met with in the Brāhmaṇas. 'A six months' embryo is the last that lives when born', says the S. B.[9] That is, foetus below six months' development does not survive if born prematurely. The same Br. observes that the foetus becomes full-fledged in the tenth month.'[10]

Wonderful knowledge of Anatomy.

Osteology

Embryology.

Detailed knowledge of medicine and anatomy are met with in the A.V. which is beyond the scope of our work.

The A.V. a repository of medicine.

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5. A.B. 5-25-9,—'Yajñasya haiva bhiṣak yad brahmā yajñāyaiva tad bheṣajaṃ kṛtvā harati.'

6. 12-7-1-12—'Te Sarasvatīmabrūvan tvaṃ vai bhaiṣajyamasti'.

7. S.B. 12-7-1-14—'Bheṣajaṃ dakṣiṇā.'

8. S.B. 11-1-6-34—'Samāvantyevāsthīni medyataśca kṛśyataśca bhavanti.'

9. 9-5-1-63—'Sanmāsyā vā antamā garbhā jātā jīvanti.'

10. 4-5-2-4—'Yadā vai garbhaḥ samṛddho bhavatyatha daśamāsyaḥ.'

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Diseases :—

A few diseases are mentioned in the Brs. Goitre is mentioned in A.B. 1-4-8.[1] Sāyaṇa explains this text thus— 'He was attacked with the disease called Gaṇḍamālā or goitre.'[2] Dropsy is mentioned in the A. B. King Hariścandra had a hundred wives but no issue. He prayed to God Varuṇa for a son and by the grace of Varuṇa a son was born to him. The king promised to offer the son in a sacrifice to Varuṇa but as he did not keep his word he was attacked with dropsy due to the visitation of Varuṇa's wrath. 'His belly became double' [3] i.e. he was down with dropsy. Sāyaṇa says, this disease is also called Mahodara. Jaundice and constipation are mentioned in the S.B. If one does not act up to a certain injunction he will die of constipation.[4] The Y. V. in general and the V.S. in particular, mention the disease Tuberculosis (Yakṣmā) several times as a dreaded fatal disease. The seer offers sincere prayers to god Rudra in the Śatarudrīya hymn of the V.S. to purge the world of the deadly disease Tuberculosis ('Ayakṣma jagat').[5]

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1. 'Grīvāsu tad-gaṇḍaṃ dadhyāt.'
2. 'Gaṇḍamālākhya-rogasthānīyaṃ doṣam dadhyāt.'
3. A.B. 7-33-3—'Tasya ha udaram jajñe.'
4. 1-4-3-20—'Apinaddho mariṣyasi.'
5. V.S. 16-4.

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BOOK I

THE SOCIAL & ECONOMIC ASPECT

CHAPTER VIII

ECONOMIC CONDITIONS

Agriculture & Pasturage :—

Agriculture was the main profession of the Vedic Aryans and they devised ways and means to improve their methods of cultivation. Ploughs and bullocks were essential and indispensable for the purpose of cultivation. There are many hymns in the R.V. which highly praise agriculture or cultivation of land. Both the Indo-Aryans and Indo-Iranians were agricultural people. Just as the terms 'Sasya' (food-grain), 'Kṛṣi' (cultivation), 'Yava' (barley) etc., are met with in the R.V., similarly the corresponding Zend terms like 'hahya', 'Karesh', 'Yao' are met with in the Āvesta. A person called Pṛthī Vainya is credited with the origination of ploughing in A.V. 8-10-24. Paddy, wheat and barley were the principal food-grains that were grown. The Br. texts record that paddy which was sown in the rains ripened in autumn whereas barley which was sown in winter ripened in summer.

Agriculture, the main occupation.

There is also reference to two harvests a year. S.B. 1-6-1-3 mentions the different processes of agriculture as 'ploughing and sowing, reaping and threshing, tilling the plants' etc.[1] Cultivated plants are called Grāmya Oṣadhi' as distinct from indigenous rank vegetation or forest growth termed 'Āraṇya-Oṣadhi' in S.B. 11-1-7-2. When the Aryans came down to the Gangetic plain, rice became

References to cultivation.

1. 'Kṛṣanto ha smaiva pūrve vapanto yanti lunanto'pare mṛṇantaḥ śaśvat haibhyo 'kṛṣṭapacyā evauṣadhayaḥ pecire.'

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their staple food and main item of cultivation. Hence autumn was looked upon as an important season being the harvesting season and we know rice (paddy) ripens in autumn. 'Corn ripens in autumn.'[2] Cow-dung was used for manuring the lands. 'Cow-dung surcharges the earth with sap ; hence cow-dung is collected (for cultivation)', says S.B.—2-1-1-7.[3] Atharva-Veda 3-14-3-4 refers to the value of the natural manure of animals.

Importance of agriculture.

During the coronation or consecration ceremony of the king in the Rājasūya sacrifice when the priests proclaimed the monarchy of the king-designate to the people addressing the king, they (priests) said,—'O king! this state is given to thee for agriculture (kṛṣyai), for the common good (kṣemāya) and for prosperity, progress (poṣāya)'. This statement proves the great importance attached to agriculture by the Vedic Aryans. 'Agriculture is verily food', says the S.B.[4]

Importance of cattle.

From the above it is clear that cows and bullocks were regarded as prized possessions by the Vedic Aryans for manure and ploughing respectively. Furrowing of land was done with ploughshares drawn by bullocks. The cow was looked upon as a sacred animal, as the mother earth in a miniature scale, 'a microcosm of the universe' in the language of Swami Vivekānanda. She was held in high esteem and addressed as goddess, Aditi, etc. A.B. 7-32-2 is a passage in point. 'This cow is veritable Earth', says the S.B.[5]

Eulogy of cattle.

Because the Aryans of the Vedic age realised the utility of cattle, they have described this priceless possession in terms of food, in terms of home, nourishment and wealth. Agriculture or cultivation was impossible without cattle, hence cattle meant food and wealth to them. 'Cattle

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2. S.B. 11-2-7-32,—'Śarad brahmā tasmād yadā śasyaṃ pacyate.'

3. 'Tadasyā evainametat pṛthivyai rasena samardhayati, tasmādākhukarīṣaṃ sambharati purīṣya iti.'

4. 7-2-2-6—'Annaṃ vai kṛṣiḥ.'

5. 5-1-3-3—'Iyaṃ vai vaśā pṛśniḥ.'

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means prosperity or nourishment,'[6] 'Goods mean cattle"[7], 'Riches mean cattle'[8] i.e., wealth lies in cattle, 'Cattle means food'[9] says the S.B. They could not think of a home without cattle or domestic beasts. Hence the S.B. goes still farther and states in clear terms—'Cattle means a home'.[10] The English word 'pecuniary' meaning money is derived from the Latin term 'Pecu' which means Pasū or cattle. Thus the very term 'Pecu', i.e. cattle means wealth in a secondary sense.

Tending cattle was a major occupation and an important task. Salt is essential for seasoning the food or drink of the cattle. This fact was well known to the ancients. Not only salt itself but even saline soil is good for cattle. 'Salt soil is suitable for cattle'.[11] 'Salt means cattle'.[12] 'Grace or wealth abides in the cattle.[13]

The A.B. 19-4 differentiates domestic animals (grāmyāḥ paśavaḥ) from animals residing in forests (āraṇyāḥ paśavaḥ) i.e., wild beasts. Dwellings of human beings are the resort of domestic animals.[14]

Occupations & Industries :—

Occupations of four castes.

The duties or occupations of the original four castes, the Brāhmaṇa, Rājanya, Vaiśya and Śūdra have been discussed at length in Book I, Chapter II under the heading 'The Caste System'. The profession of the Brāhmaṇas or priestly class was to act as minister and adviser to the king, as spiritual guides, teachers, and priests in sacrifices. They gave counsel to the king in both spiritual and political matters. The Kṣatriyas were entrusted with the administra-

6. 3-1-4-14—'Puṣṭiḥ paśavaḥ.'
7. 3-7-3-13—'Paśavo vasu.'
8. 11-8-1-3—'Paśavo vai mahaḥ.'
9. 3-7-1-20—'Paśavo hi annam.'
10. 1-8-2-14—'Gṛhā hi paśavaḥ.'
11. 2-1-1-6—'Paśavyamūṣaramityāhuḥ.'
12. 5-2-1-16—'Paśavo vā ūṣā.'
13. P.B. 13-2-2— Śrīrvai paśavaḥ.'
14. A.B. 3-12-13—'Gṛhā hi paśūnaṃ pratiṣṭhā.'

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tion of kingdom, maintenance of law and order, protection of the people and fighting enemies. Trade, commerce and agriculture were mainly in the hands of the Vaiśyas. The Śūdra community was enjoined upon to serve the three higher classes or castes. From the era of the Saṃhitās down to the ages numerous mixed castes emerged due to inter-caste marriages of every possible variety which were both Anuloma and Pratiloma. Different callings were prescribed for those cross-bred mixed castes ; hence many new occupations came into existence which were not heard of during the early Vedic age.

Emergence of new castes and callings.

A.B. 6-30-1 refers to industries of gods called 'Devaśilpa and industries of men. The word 'Śilpa' is mentioned and as illustration of industries, toy-making, glassworks, weaving, works of gold and chariotwright have been mentioned.[15] In this passage 'Hastī' or elephant means elephant and suchlike toys, Kaṃsa means looking-glass i.e., glasswork, Vāsa refers to cloth-making or weaving, 'Hiraṇyam' refers to the calling of the goldsmith and 'Aśvatarīratha' means construction of chariots fit to be drawn by she-mules. The last item at once proves the fact that chariots to be drawn by horses differed from those drawn by mules in size and shape. Chariotwrights held an important position in the society. They were called 'Rathakāras' and their representatives used to attend the coronation ceremony of the king. Carpenters (Takṣā), charioteers, leather-workers, wine-makers (surākṛtaḥ), acrobats have been mentioned in the A.B. and S.B. Weaving, knitting, sewing, embroidery were widely practised by the womenfolk. We have already dilated on this point in the discussion under the caption 'Women and marriage'. A female embroiderer was called Peśaskarī, 'Peśa' meaning ornamentation or embroidery. Plaiting of mats with the leaves and fibres of Plakṣa tree was also a profession for the ladies but it was also done by men. The S.B. refers to

Various industries mentioned.

15. 'Iha śilpamadhigamyate hastī, kaṃso, vāso, hiraṇyam, aśvatarīrathaḥ śilpam.'

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brick-making (6-2-1-9), snake-charmers (13-4-3-9 'sarpavidyā'), bird-catchers (13-4-3-13) etc. It is evident from S.B. 6-2-1 that the Aryans of that age were expert in the art of brick-making. The bricks were necessary for the construction of colossal sacrificial altars. The references to vessels made of gold, silver, bell-metal, lead, iron etc. prove the existence of goldsmiths, silversmiths, ironsmiths and workers in lead and bell-metal. Metals mentioned in the A.B. and the S.B. will be described under the heading 'Metals and Measurements'. Various vessels used in sacrifice and the pestle and mortar were made of stone. Stone-cutting was one of the professions. The term Bhiṣak refers to physicians. Dancing and singing were also resorted to by some as a means of livelihood as is known from the S.B. Drivers of bullock-carts, grooms of horses and boatmen are also met with in the Br. texts. During the consecration or coronation ceremony the king had to seek the consent of the representatives of the classes and castes, such as the chief priest, commander-in-chief, the chief queen, other kings, headman of the village, chariotwright or Rathakāra, Takṣā or carpenter etc. (Vide the discussion of Ratna-Haviṣ ceremony under the caption 'The Coronation Ceremony' in Book II). These representatives were called king-makers (Rāja-kṛtaḥ). The inclusion of two artisan classes viz, chariotwright and carpenter in the list of king-makers goes to prove the importance attached and high status assigned to industry in the Vedic age.

Hunting was a pastime with the kings and nobles though it is not mentioned as an occupation. Killing of wild beasts was also necessary for the protection of domestic animals and human beings. The huntsman was called Govikarta.

Flute-players, lute-players and drummers have already been referred to under the caption 'Music and Dance'.

The S.B. refers also to potters (Kulāla) (11-8-1-1). Women dyers were called 'Rajayitrī', women workers in thorns, 'kantakīkarī' and female basket-makers were termed 'vidalakarī'. Rope-makers used to prepare rope from the bark of the tree known as Rajjudāla or 'cordia myxa' (S.B. 13-4-4-5).

The sixth chapter of the thirteenth kāṇḍa of the S.B. enumerates the sacrifice known as Puruṣamedha. The large number

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of victims symbolically offered in this sacrifice comprises more than seventy human beings differing in their castes and occupations. One will be struck dumb with wonder to find so many occupations existing in India at such a hoary antiquity, at least before 1200 B.C. The list of victims is enumerated in the thirtieth chapter of the V.S. Hence this chapter on Puruṣamedha is all-important and the discussion of occupations of the later Vedic age will remain incomplete if the occupations mentioned in the V.S. are not taken into account. The following professions are met with in the text concerned, Minstrel (Magadha), actor (śailūṣa), herald or panegyrist (sūta), Counsellor (Sabhākara), chariotwright (Rathakāra), carpenter (Takṣā), potter (kulāla), blacksmith (karmāra), jeweller (Maṇikāra), barber or sower (vapa), arrowsmith (Iṣukāra), bow-maker (Dhanuṣkāra), maker of the bow-string (Jyākāra), rope-maker (Rajju-sarja), huntsman (Mṛgayu), dog-rearer or dog-keeper (Śvanin), bird catcher or fisherman (Puñjiṣṭha), female cane-worker or basket maker (Vidalakārī), female worker in thorns (Kantakīkārī), female expert in embroidery (Peśaskarī), physician (Bhiṣaja), astronomer (Nakṣatradarśa), elephant-keeper (Hastipa), horse-keeper or groom (Aṣvapa), cowherd (Gopāla), shepherd (Avi-pāla), goatherd (Aja-pāla), husbandman i.e., cultivator (kīnāśa), distiller of liquor (surākāra), housekeeper (Gṛhapa), charioteer (kṣattā), assistant charioteer (Anukṣattā), fuel-fetcher, wood-gatherer (Dārvāhāra), image-maker (Peṣitā), washer-woman (vāsa-palpūlī), female dyer (Rajayitrī), spy or informer (Piśuna), door-keeper (Kṣattā), assistant door-keeper (Anukṣattā), horseman (Aśva-sāda), tax-collector (Bhāga-dugha), a female expert in preparing unguents and cosmetics (Anjanī-kārī), female scabbard-maker (koṣa-kārī), furrier (Ajina-sandha), tanner (carmāra), fisherman (Dhīvara), dealer in dried fish (śauṣkala), goldsmith (Hiraṇyakāra), merchant (vanija), keeper of forest (vanapa), lute-player (Vīnā-vāda), flute-player (Tūnava-dhma), conch-blower (Śankha-dhma), acrobat, a pole-dancer (Vaṃśa-nartin), headman of a village (Grāmaṇī), astrologer (Gaṇaka), and the herald or announcer (Abhikrośaka). From this important text of the V.S. we find that all these occupations and industries received religious sanction, as the men following

More than seventy professions mentioned in V.S.

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these occupations were offered as victims in the Puruṣamedha sacrifice. This list also proves that some occupations were earmarked for the women-folk and that women of certain castes had to take to some profession for their livelihood.

Some professions earmarked for women.

Trade & Commerce :—

As a rule, Vaiśyas were entrusted with agriculture, trade and commerce. Vaiśyas who amassed fortune out of agriculture took to trade and commerce. They were called Vaṇik or Śreṣṭhī and held exalted position amongst the Vaiśyas. The S.B. mentions the terms 'Vaṇik' and 'Vāṇijya'. The śreṣṭhī occurs in the A.B. in the sense of merchant-prince or headman of a guild. Embroidered cloth, garments, turbans, deer-skin, goat-skin, wool of the sheep, ornaments of gold and silver, food-grains, cattle and the like were the commodities of trade and commerce. We shall discuss about coins, measurement and currency under 'Metals and Measurement's. Gold coins called Niṣka were in use. Gold, rice or food-grains, cloth and cattle, cows in particular were the medium of barter. These were current as units of value.

References to merchants and merchandise.

There cannot be a shade of doubt that the sea or ocean was well known to the Aryans of the Vedic age. Not only did they possess knowledge of the ocean but there were sea-going huge vessels and maritime trade as well. The RgVeda mentions vessels propelled by hundred oars (śatāritra-nāva). 'The ocean swells round the earth' says the S.B.[16] Ocean or 'Samudra' has been mentioned several times in the A.B. 'A king who will be Ekarāt (one supreme head) will rule over the whole earth stretching as far as the ocean or girdled by the ocean like a paramount sovereign.[17] The fathomless deep is mentioned in many Br. texts. T.B. 2-2-9-2. refers to the saline water of the sea and remarks, 'hence

Sea-going vessels and maritime trade.

16. 7-4-1-9—'Samudro hīmāmabhitaḥ pinvate.'

17. 8-39-1—'Sārvabhaumaḥ sarvāyuṣa āntādā parārdhāt pṛthivyai samudraparyantāyā ekarāditi'.

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men do not drink the water of the sea'. The Vedic Aryans were conversant with the fact that the sea never transgresses its limits ; the high water level reached by the full tide remains the same. This observation is recorded in A.B. 5-23-1.

Money-lending was allowed and it became the profession of some members of the Vaiśya community. They were called "Kuṣidin' and lent money on interest. The S.B. mentions such money-lenders. 'The money-lenders or userers have assembled'.[18]

Money-lending.

House-Building :—

The art of house-building attained a considerable standard in the Brāhmanical period. Various types of houses, forts and cities have been mentioned. The terms Pura, Purī, Pūḥ, meaning cities and forts, Prākāra meaning 'ramparts' or 'walls' occur again and again. The A.B. refers to a city created by the Asuras[19] and Sāyaṇa explains the term 'puraḥ' there as a 'city bordered with wall.'[20] Men lived in well-built houses divided into several apartments fitted with doors, windows and bolts. The S. B. mentions castles, ramparts made of stone, 'Aśma-pura' (3-1-3-11) and houses with safest roofs' 'chhardiṣā śantamena (7-4-2-8)'. Expert masons knew how to fashion palaces of gold. 'Gold mansions' occur in S.B. 13-5-1-11.[21] Houses of gold, silver and iron are mentioned in the A.B. 1-4-6.[22]

House-building. References to cities and forts.

The construction of different types of altar for different Vedic sacrifices involved an intricate knowledge of geometry and architecture. Some altars resembled the figure of women, some of semi-circle, some of circle, some resembled flying falcons. More

Developed architecture.

18. 13-4-3-11—'Kuṣidina upasametā bhavanti.'

19. 1-4-6—'Asurā imāneva lokān puro'kurvata.'

20. 'Puro'kurvata prākāraveṣṭita-nagarādi kṛtavantaḥ.'

21. 'Sa.....ājagāmed hiraṇyavimitāni'. Sāyaṇa comments—'hiraṇyavimitāni hiraṇyanirmitāni saudhāni'.

22. 'Ayasmayīṃ.....rajatīṃ.....hariṇīm'.

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than six hundred bricks were needed to erect complex types of altars. The construction of the fire-altar with 10,800 (ten thousand and eight hundred) bricks shaped like a colossal flying falcon with wings outspread bespeaks superb architectural skill. The intricate process of the construction of this fire-altar is recorded in the S. B. Such altars can be termed sculptural architecture or architectural sculpture because the art of sculpture must shake hands with architecture in the creation of such altars.

Good roads and thoroughfares were essential for communication and hence the art of road-construction gradually improved. Royal thoroughfare was called "Rājapatha' or 'Sruti' whereas the national highways was called 'Mahāpatha'. A.B. 18-3, mentions both Sruti and Mahāpatha. It seems that the latter was connected with and fed by many minor thoroughfares leading to different parts of the country. The former was comparatively free from dangers and its construction was better than the Mahāpatha. Rājapatha is comfortable and a short cut whereas Mahāpatha leads to various directions, observes the A.B. Roads connected villages with one another. Roads marking the boundaries of villages used to run parallel to each other.[23]

Road-making.

Rājapatha, Mahāpatha, Sruti etc.

Transport :—

Chariots drawn either by horses or by mules and carts drawn by bullocks were common conveyances. Chariots were also used for hunting and warfare. Chariots drawn by horses differed in size and shape from those drawn by mules. Again, some chariots were drawn by a single horse while others by two horses. The chariot drawn by a single horse is mentioned in A.B. 5-25-5.[24] Chariots drawn by she-mules used to run very fast. The A.B. refers to such

Chariots, mule carts and bullock carts.

23. S.B. 13-2-4-2—'Samadhvānaḥ krāmeyuḥ samantikaṃ grāmayoḥ grāmāntau syāt'.

24. 'Yathā ha vā asthūriṇaikena yāsyāt' : Sāyaṇa explains thus, Asthūriṇāmāśvo ratha-vājī'.

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chariots called Aśvatarī-ratha. There is reference to cart in the Soma-yāga also. The Soma creeper regarded and honoured as a king was placed on a cart called Soma-śakata. The different parts of a cart, śakata, such as yuga or yoke, Śamya or yoke-pin etc., are mentioned in S.B. 3-5-1-24.

Parts of a chariot.

All wheeled vehicles were generally referred to by the term 'cakra' alone. Thus we read in the S.B.—'gods were driving about in wheels', i.e., wheeled vehicles.[25] A matchless chariot was called 'Asama-ratha' and one gloriously poised on a chariot was termed 'Rathecitra'. Descriptions of village headmen and soldiers moving colourfully in chariots are met with in the S.B. The different parts of a chariot are described in the T.B. 1-5-12-5 such as wheels, axle, yoke, the pole connecting the yoke with the chariot, the seat etc. In this passage the journey of god Prajāpati is described. He wanted to go to heaven in a chariot. The different metres became the different parts of that chariot. The metres Gāyatrī and Jagatī became the wheels. Uṣṇik and Tṛṣṭup were transformed into the connecting pole. Bṛhatī became the high seat of the chariot; Anuṣṭup and Paṅkti were the horses of the chariot.

Classes of chariots.

Ferry boats called Naukā or Nāva to cross rivers and sea-going strong-built vessels are referred to. The A.B. refers to boats wherewith one can cross easily (Sutarmā Nauḥ 1-3-2). A.B. 6-29-5 makes an important observation with regard to sea-going vessels. It mentions a particular kind of vessel called Sairāvatī wherewith one can cross the sea. 'Those desirous of crossing the sea should board the vessel known as Sairāvatī'.[26] The mythological story of the great deluge occurs in S.B. 1-8-1. There we read how Manu built himself a strong vessel able to stand the rage of wind and water and kept himself afloat in that vessel which sailed

Classes of boats.

Large sea-going vessels.

25. 6-8-1-1—'Te devāścakramacaran : cakreṇa hi devāścarantaḥ.'

26. 'Tad yathā samudraṃ praplaveran evaṃ haiva te praplavante .....yathā sairāvatīṃ nāvaṃ pārakāmāḥ samāroheyuḥ' : Sāyaṇa comments—'samudrasya paratiragamanakāmāḥ puruṣā sairāvatīṃ nāvaṃ samāroheyuḥ.'

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over the mighty waters of the illimitable fathomless deep.

Different parts of a ship.

Different parts of a ship such as spars, oars, mast etc., have been described in S.B. 3-5-1-14. Yajña or sacrifice is often described as a boat that carries the sacrificer to heaven. It is a common stock-in-trade simile in the Brāhmaṇas. Thus the daily sacrifice known as Agnihotra is compared to a ship in S.B. 2-3-3-15 which observes—'The Agnihotra, truly, is the ship (that sails) heavenwards. The Āhavanīya and Gārhapatya are the two sides of that heaven-bound ship, and the offerer of milk is its steersman.[27] 'He who goes to the sea without a ship does never come out of it', observes the P.B.[28]

Metals & Measurements :—

The A.B. mentions gold, silver (7-32-11), bell-metal (6-30-1) and iron. S.B. adds to this list lead and copper. 'Lead is neither iron nor gold'.[1] 'Copper is not gold ; it is red in colour'.[2] In this text 'Lohāyas' means copper and not iron. Simply 'Ayas' means iron. In the later Vedic age the word 'Ayas' was used with different adjectives prefixed to mean either copper or iron. Thus 'Lohāyas' or Lohitāyas meant copper whereas Śhyāmāyas or Kārṣṇāyas signified iron. Gold was looked upon as a mark of nobility whereas iron as a mark of the common people.

Various kinds of metals.

As for measurement we find reference to definite weights of gold indicating a gold currency in the later Vedic age. Thus S.B. 5-5-5-16 mentions a gift or Dakṣiṇā consisting of three hundred gold coins.[3] Here śatamāna or 'measures of hundred' mean weight of a

Gold currency.

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27. 'Naurha vā eṣā svargyā yadagnihotraṃ tasyā etasyai nāvaḥ svargyāyā āhavanīyaścaiva gārhapatyaśca nau-maṇḍe ; athaiṣa eva nāvājo yat kṣīrahotā'.

28. 14-5-17—'Yo vā aplavaḥ samudraṃ prasarāti na sa tata udeti'.

1. S.B. 12-7-1-17—'Sīsaṃ na ayo na hiraṇyam.'

2. S.B. 5-4-1-2—'Na hiraṇyaṃ yallohāyasam', 'lohāyasaṃ lohita iva.'

3. 'Tasyai trīṇi śatamānāni hiraṇyāni dakśiṇā.'

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hundred kṛṣṇalas. 'Gold weighing hundred grains'[4], 'four gold plates weighing hundred grains'[5] are also mentioned. Lead was also used as a medium of barter or exchange. Spirituous liquor called Parisrut was purchased in exchange of lead.[6] Gold was produced by smelting ore.[7]

Different parts of the human hand were regarded as units of measurements for measuring the length, breadth and thickness of any object. The fingers (Aṅguli), the portion from the wrist to the elbow (Aratni), the span or stretch from the tip of the thumb to the tip of the index finger (Prādeśa) were standards of measurements. The S.B. calls the finger the lowest unit of measurement. 'The lowest units of measurement are the fingers'[8]. The term 'Pāda' (foot) appears as a measure of length in the same Br.[9] This term is also used to indicate a measure of weight. As a fraction it means a quarter and this sense is derived from that of one foot out of four feet of a quadruped ; hence the term 'śapha' (cleft hoof) means an eighth part. The R.V., the A.V., T.S., S.B. etc., use the term, 'śapha' in this sense of a fraction, i.e., 'one-eighth'. The A.B., S.B., C.U. use the term 'Prādeśa' in the sense of a span. A man's stride called 'Prakrama' is mentioned as a unit of measurement in the S.B.[10], but the exact length denoted by the said term has not been mentioned. The term 'Prādeśa' seems to originate from the index finger or forefinger which is the indicator (Pra-diś) ; hence the span from the tip of the thumb to the tip of the forefinger when stretched out is called Prādeśa, a common unit of measurement for all times and climes. The term 'Prasṛta' is met with in the S.B. as a measure of capacity meaning

Different units of measurement.

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4. S.B. 12-7-2-13—'Suvarṇam hiraṇyaṃ bhavati.....śatamānaṃ bhavati.'

5. S.B. 13-4-1-6—'Catvāri ca suvarṇāni śatamānāni hiraṇyāni.'

6. S.B. 5-1-2-14—'Sīsena parisrutaṃ krīṇāti.'

7. S.B. 6-1-3-5—'Ayaso hiraṇyaṃ tasmāt ayaso bahudhmāto hiraṇyasankāśamivaiva bhavati.'

8. 10-2-1-2—'Tasyaiṣāvamā mātrā yadaṃgulayaḥ.'

9. 6-5-3-2, 7-2-1-7, 8-7-2-17 etc.

10. 10-2-3-1—'Trīn prācaḥ prakraman prakramati.'

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'a handful'.[11] This term literally means 'stretched out', 'expanded' ; in the present context it indicates the hollowed palm 'stretched out', to receive something. Similarly the term "Añjali' meant two handfuls joined together, i.e., the the double of Prasṛta. An earthen pot called Śarāba was used as a measure of corn. The T.B. and the S.B. mention this measurement. 'Rice-pudding prepared from Nivāra corn measuring seventeen śarāvas'.[12] 'He places pudding made of Nivāra corn measuring seventeen śarāvas meant for Bṛhaspati'.[13] The term 'Vyāma' used in connection with measurement indicates the span from the tip of the middle finger of one hand to the tip of the middle finger of another hand of a person standing with arms outstretched ; that is taken to be the height of a man. S.B. 10-2-3- is a passage in point which gives us the different measurements of the sacrificial altar.

SUMMARY OF BOOK I

There were four main castes which consisted of the Brāhmaṇas, the Kṣatriyas, Vaiśyas and the Śūdras. The Viś or Vaiśya representing the commoner formed the base of the social structure on which the Brāhmaṇa, and the Kṣatriya rested. The Brāhmaṇa and the Kṣatriya were superior to the Vaiśya, while all the higher classes were superior to the Śūdra. The kings and the nobles represented the ruling or the military class and the real power of the state rested with them. The priestly class was made up of Brāhmaṇas. There was keen competition between the ruling class and the priestly class in the bid for social ascendancy ; there was also close co-operation between the two classes to maintain the balance of power and to keep under subjection the Vaiśya and the Śūdra classes for the smooth functioning of the social machinery. The Kṣatriyas were temporal lords whereas the Brāhmaṇas were spiritual lords. Every king had his family priest or

11. 4-5-10-7—'Prasṛtamātraṃ vāñjalimātraṃ vā.'

12. T.B. 1-3-4-5—'Naivāreṇa saptadaśa-śarāvena.'

13. S.B. 5-1-4-12—'Atha Bārhaspatyaṃ caruṃ naivāraṃ saptadaśa-śarāvaṃ nirvapati.'

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royal chaplain whose function was that of a Prime Minister ; besides religious matters he advised the king on socio-political matters as well and acted as a go-between between the ruler and the ruled. The Vaiśyas were the tenants and the nobles were the landlords. The king was the owner of all lands. The Śūdra community was raised from the non-Aryan tribes termed Dasyus who submitted to the hegemony of the Aryans. The Śūdras thus comprised many non-Aryan aboriginal races and tribes. They became serfs and served the three upper classes. They along with the Vaiśyas formed the bulk of the Viś or commoner. People engaged in agriculture, pastoral pursuits and trade, paid tribute to the king and nobles for the protection afforded them. The Vaiśya could be evicted from his land at the sweet will of the land owner. The Śūdras had no right of property or security of life ; he could be slain at the sweet will of his master.

It seems the priestly class attained the height of its glory during the age of the A.B. and S.B. which extol the power, importance and the glory of the priests in hyperbolic terms. But during the last phase of the later Vedic age, i.e., during the age of the Āraṇyakas and Upaniṣads the priests began to lose their hold on the ruling class and their importance as an organ of administration. As sacrifices were underrated in the age of the Āryaṇyakas and Upaniṣads, naturally the priests were also no more held in esteem. The ruling power came to prominence overshadowing the priestly class in that age and the epic age as well.

Notwithstanding the demarcation of castes along with their duties there is very little evidence in the Vedic literature of untouchability of low castes and impurity caused by their contact which is a salient characteristic of the later system of Dharmasūtras and Smṛti-texts. The characteristics of caste in the Vedic age are heredity, pursuit of a common occupation, and restrictions on inter-marriage.

Much stress is given on the descent from a Ṛṣi, and on purity of gotra, as a rule. The king during the consecration ceremony had to mention his Ṛṣi, the origin of his line. Notwithstanding this stress on the purity of the breed, we find instances of mixed castes who were born

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of cross-breeding between different castes and sub-castes occupying positions of honour. Sage Kavaṣa, son of Ilūṣa, is an illustration in point. Likewise we come across cases where men of higher castes have been degraded and classed with outcasts on account of their crimes or wrong conduct. The sons of Viśvāmitra became progenitors of inferior castes and outcasts as a result of their father's curse. For his spiritual attainment and knowledge, par excellence, S.B. 11-6-2-10 states that king Janaka, though a Kṣatriya, became a Brāhmaṇa. The sages declared him to be a Brāhmaṇa. Thus in these instances conduct and intellectual or spiritual attainment and not heredity get the upper hand in determining the caste.

The Vaiśya and the Śūdra classes were gradually upgraded so far as their social status was concerned. The pattern of society was simple in the early Vedic age. During the later Vedic era it become complicated as various mixed castes evolved with new occupations allotted to them. The importance of the Vaiśya and the Śūdra communities was realised by the higher two castes. Gradually the Vaiśya was approximating to the position of tenants and nobles, and the Śūdra was approximating more and more to the position to which the humbler free man was reduced. The growing complication of the social machinery gradually abolished the relation of simple slavery. Thus while some of the aboriginal inhabitants became slaves, pure and simple, the bulk of the Śūdra community stood in the relationship of serfs. Some mixed castes, the Rathakāras or chariotwrights, e.g., enjoyed an esteemed position in the society and were put on a par with the Vaiśyas. They had the right to place their sacrificial fire like three upper castes and enjoyed the special prerogative of being designated as king-makers along with other king-makers. During the performance of the horse-sacrifice the royal paraphernalia that attended upon the horse for its protection when it was let loose is allowed to take rest in the house of a chariotwright when it encamped on the way. Chariots were the main conveyances for traffic, trade, warfare, hunting etc. Hence the importance of chariotwrights was realised by the state and society and an esteemed position was given to them. Their co-opera-

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tion was essential for victory in war, success in hunting, smooth communication and traffic.

Inter-marriage among the castes had commenced. The three wives of the king, viz,—Mahiṣī, Vāvātā and Parivṛktā belonged to the three castes, Kṣatriya, Vaiśya and Śūdra respectively. Women of the śūdra community were kept as mistresses and concubines by the males of the three upper castes. Marriage was looked upon as a sacrament and not as a contract or companionate union. As a rule chastity and high moral tone obtained in the conjugal life. Stray instances of illicit love and moral laxity in married life are exceptions that go to prove the general rule.

Education was compulsory for the upper three castes who were eligible to be invested with the holy thread. There is no reference regarding any arrangement for imparting education to the Śūdras though their economic welfare was looked after by the state. There were residential institutions or forest schools run by learned sages for the education of the boys of higher castes. There were also peripatetic teachers called 'Carakas' who moved from place to place like mobile schools and offered instructions. Education was imparted free of cost. Parents had not to pay a farthing for the education of their children. The students were maintained by the villages skirting the sylvan institutions. They begged cooked food as alms from the villagers daily. The syllabus was varied and exhaustive which was drawn up with an eye to both the man-making and brain-making aspects of education. The snātakas or graduates were held in high esteem in the society. Names of learned women occur in the pages of the Brs., but we do not know whether there existed institutions to offer instructions to women like those meant for boys. People longed for the birth of learned daughters just as they did for learned sons. It seems the womenfolk received their instructions at home from their fathers and relations.

Fine arts were cultivated ; women were adept in embroidery, knitting, sewing, weaving and dyeing. The Brs. testify to high class embroidery works done by ladies. Music, both vocal and instrumental, and dance were widely practised by both the sexes but mostly by the fair sex.

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Various professions came into existence to provide for the livelihood of the various castes, sub-castes and mixed castes. The Śukla-Yajurveda mentions more than seventy professions some of which were earmarked for women. Those who practised these professions are mentioned as symbolic victims in the sacrifice known as Puruṣamedha. This fact proves that the occupations received religious sanction. The ruler arranged for the economic solvency of the subjects. There was a gold currency ; gold and silver ornaments were in use. Besides gold and silver mention is made of brass, copper, iron, lead and tin.

Agriculture was the main occupation. Wheat, paddy and barley were the staple food. Honey, liquors of various kinds, milk, etc., were used as drinks. Some juice was a hieratic drink.

Maritime trade was in existence. There were sea-going vessels equipped with hundred oars. The A.B. distinctly states that while going to distant lands across the sea people used to take provisions and drinking water with them that might last for a good length of time.

Village life and township were settled facts. The headmen of villages called the Grāmaṇīs held important offices and were included in the list of Ratnins or king-makers. From the references to Pūḥ, Pur, Purī and famous capitals such as Videha of king Janaka and Kāśī of king Ajāstaśatru we may safely conclude that some towns and cities were in existence. Public highways and good roads were constructed known as Mahāpatha, Rājapatha etc.

The centre of gravity of the Aryan civilisation had shifted from the Indus valley to the Gangetic plain and names of new states and peoples are met with for the first time such as Kuru, Pañcāla, Uśīnara, Vaśa, Uttarakuru, Uttara-madra, Kosala, Kāśī, Vidarbha, Videha, Magadha etc. The west recedes into the background ; the central and eastern territories come into limelight. Very low castes and outcasts such as Śabara, Andhra, Puṇḍra, Pulinda, Mūtiba, Nīcya, Apācya, Niṣāda, Bainda, Kaivarta, Mārgāra (huntsman), Kirāta, Jambhaka, Paulkasa, Caṇḍāla etc., are met with in the Brs. and the V.S. which is contemporaneous with the Brs.

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BOOK II

THE POLITICAL & MILITARY ASPECT

CHAPTER 1

THE SYSTEM OF GOVT. AND THE DIFFERENT TYPES OF MONARCHY

Since the Ṛg-vedic period monarchy was the system of govt. prevailing in the Vedic age. The term 'Rājan' occurs frequently in the Ṛg-veda. Some kings are mentioned by name as well, e.g., king Citra residing near the river Saraswatī.[1] Strifes between tribal kings or chieftains and the historic battle fought by Sudasa in which ten kings took active part are also narrated in the Ṛg-veda. The Kṣatriya caste was called Rājanya, i.e., the ruling class or the military class. The conception of kingship was ingrained in the minds of the people and monarchical government was the rule of the day. The conception of kingship was not only confined to human beings but also obtained in the Vedic pantheon, animal world and vegetable kingdom. Soma and Indra were kings amongst gods. 'Indra is the Kṣatriya among the gods'.[2] 'The Sun-god or Āditya is the divine Kṣatriya or heavenly ruler'.[3] Amongst beasts the tiger is mentioned as the king and the lion, the overlord. 'The tiger is the king of beasts', 'the lion is the overlord of all beasts'.[4] 'The falcon is the king of birds'.[5] In the vegetable kingdom—'Aśvattha

Monarchy, the prevailing system of govt.

Kingship in vegetable and animal world.

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1. R.V. 8-21-18—'Citra id rājā rājakā idanyake yake sarasvatīmanu.'

2. A.B. 7-34-5—'Atha Indro vai daivatayā kṣatriyo bhavati.'

3. A.B. 7-34-2—'Ādityo vai daivaṃ kśatram.'

4. S.B. 12-7-1-8—'Vyāghra āraṇyānāṃ paśūnāṃ rājā, simha āraṇyānāṃ paśūnāmīśaḥ.'

5. S.B. 12-7-1-6—'Śyeno vāyasāṃ rājā.'

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(Ficus religiosa) is the emperor'[6] and 'the banyan tree is the king of trees'.[7] The A.B. mentions many kings such as king Hariścandra (7-33-1). king Parikṣita and his son Janamejaya, king Śaryāta Mānava, king Śatānīka Sātrājita (8-39-7), kings of Satvat people and kings of untouchable castes (8-38-3), kings of Kuru and Madra countries and kings of Uśīnara and Kuru-pañcāla territories (8-38-3), etc. Both the A.B. and the S.B. (13-5-4) record the conquests of two Bharata kings, Dauḥṣanti and king Sātrājita Śatānīka.

Names of kings.

As to the origin of kingship or institution of monarchy the A.B. recounts the following anecdote. Once the gods were defeated by the Asuras in every direction. At that time there was no king among the gods. Brooding over the cause of their signal defeat at the hands of the Asuras or demons thus said the gods—'Because we are without a king they have been able to defeat us ; we shall elect a king.' All consented unanimously. They elected god Soma as their king and conquered all the directions (defeating the demons) guided by king Soma.[8] This passage proves the emergence of kingship by election at the time of emergency or national calamity and the function of that king was more that of a military commander than of a constitutional ruler. Naturally the first king had to be elected whether in heaven or on earth but for that reason it should not be inferred that kingship was elective in character. All the reference to monarchy prove beyond a shade of doubt that hereditary kingship was the rule and inheritance by the law of primogeniture was the practice. Observes Dr. U. N. Ghosal,—'.....we have concrete evidence of the general prevalence of hereditary monarchy as well as of the survival of dynastic govts. during the present (i.e., later Vedic) period, but of elective monarchy there is hardly any

Origin of kingship.

6. A.B. 7-35-6—'Yadaśvatthaḥ sāmrājyaṃ vā etad vanaspatīnām.'

7. A.B. 7-35-5—'Kṣatraṃ ha vā etad vanaspatīnāṃ yannyagrodhaḥ.'

8. A.B. 1-3-3—'Te devā avrūvan arājatayā vai no jayanti rājānaṃ karavāmahā iti tatheti. Te somaṃ rājānamakurvan. Te somena rajñā sarvā diśo'jayan.'

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trace. In the latest Vedic period the hereditary principle is sufficiently established to make succession by primogeniture the normal rule'.[9]

The conception of state came into being along with the evolution of kingship. The state was called Rājya or Rāṣṭra.

State.

The term Rāṣṭra is frequently met with in the Vedic literature from the Saṃhitā to the Brs. Kingship and kingdom, monarchy and the state were identified with each other as the relation between the two was inseparable. 'Kingship is state indeed', observes the A.B.[10] 'The king residing in his state is deemed well-established'.[11] Observes the S.B., 'Kings are the upholders of states ; they maintain or protect the kingdom.'[12] 'The king should be strong of arms'.[13]

Different types of territory or states bespeaking different types of monarchy or suzerainty are enumerated in the Brāhmaṇas. Soma, Indra, Āditya etc., are called Rājā' or kings whereas god Varuṇa is termed Samrāt. Thus prays the earthly king to Varuṇa—'Varuṇa, the Samrāt universal sovereign, the lord of universal sovereigns, bestow universal sovereignty upon me'.[14] Soma, again, is called not only king or Rājā but also 'Lord of Kings'—'Rājapati'.[15] The term Mahārāja also occurs in both the A.B. and the S.B. in particular and Br. texts in general. As illustrations of Mahārāja or supreme kings the A.B. (7-35-8) enumerates names of such kings as—Janamejaya, Somaka Sāhadevya, Sṛñjaya, Kadrudaivāvṛdha, Bhima-Vaidarbha, Nagnajit Gāndhāra, Sanaśruta, Arindama, Kratuvid, Jānaki and Sudāsa Paijavana etc. 'All these rulers were great kings (Mahārāja) ;

Different types of monarchy.

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9. A History of Hindu Public Life, Part I, Chapter III, page 97.

10. 7-34-4—'Kṣatraṃ hi rāṣṭram.'

11. A.B. 8-37-4—'Iha kṣatriyo, rāṣtre vasan bhavati pratiṣṭhita iva.'

12. 9-4-1-1—'Rājāno vai rāṣtrabhṛtaste hi rāṣṭrāṇi bibhrati.'

13. 13-2-2-5—'Tasmād rājā bāhuvalī bhāvukaḥ.'

14. S.B. 11-4-3-10—'Varuṇaḥ samrāt samrātpatiḥ sāmrājyaṃ asmin yajñe mayi dadhātu'.

15. S.B. 11-4-3-9—'Somo rājā rājapatiḥ.'

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they attended with glory, oppressed (the enemy) like the sun and realised taxes from all directions'.[16] 'After obtaining victory alone a king can become a Mahārāja', says the S.B., just as 'Indra became Mahendra after slaying Vṛtra'.[17]

Conception of Imperialism.

The paramount sovereign who rules or holds sway till the end of the country touching the ocean without any rival sovereign is termed Sārvabhauma Samanta in the A.B. 'He is called a Samanta, a paramount sovereign who is the sole and unrivalled ruler (Ekarāt) of the earth extending to the ocean'.[18] Besides these, the A.B. mentions eleven types of sovereignty corresponding to eleven types of territories, viz., Rājya, Sāmrājya, Māhārājya, Bhaujya, Svārājya, Vairājya, Pārameṣṭhya, Rājya, Ādhipatya, Svavaśatā and Ātiṣṭhatva,[19] translated by Keith as 'Kingship, overlordship, paramount rule, self-rule, sovereignty, supreme authority, kingship, great kingship, suzerainty, supremacy and pre-eminence respectively.[20] Sāyaṇācāryya in his commentary on the A.B. explains the first five types of sovereignty as different types or grades of worldly lordship or lordship on earth and the last five as different types or grades of other-worldly monarchy or suzerainty in heaven when the soul shuffles off the mortal coil. Thus

Gradation in the types of monarchy.

does he comment on the A.B. 8-37-5 ;[21] Rājya means lordship of a country ; Sāmrājya means rule with justice ; Bhaujya is enjoyment and prosperity ; Svārājya means independence ; distinction in rank from other kings is Vairājya.

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16. A.B. 7-35-8—'Sarve haiva mahārājā āsurāditya iva : ha sma śriyāṃ pratiṣṭhitāstapanti, sarvābhyo digbhyo valimāvahanti.'

17. S.B. 1-6-4-21 and 2-5-4-9—'Indro vā eṣa purā vṛtrasya vadhādatha vṛtraṃ hatvā yathā mahārājo vijigyāna evaṃ mahendro'bhavat.'

18. A.B. 8-39-1—'Ayaṃ samantaparyāyī syāt sārvabhaumaḥ sarvāyuṣaḥ.....samudraparyantāyā ekarāditi.'

19. A.B. 8-37-5, 8-37-2, 8-38-1 and 8-39-1.

20. Keith : The Ṛgveda Brāhmaṇas ; A.B. 8-37-5.

21. 'Tānahamanurājyāya sāmrājyāya bhaujyāya svārājyāya vairajyāya pārameṣṭhyāya rājyāya māhārājyāyādhipatyāya svāvaśyāyātiṣṭhāyārohamīti.'

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Thus worldly lordship is enumerated ; now post-mortem heavenly lordship is being stated : Pārameṣṭhya means attainment of Prajāpatiloka ; Rājya means prosperity ; superiority to other heavenly lords constitutes Māhārājya ; Ādhipatya is to lord over other kings in heaven. Svāvaśya is independence, eternal abode in heaven in Ātiṣṭhatva.[22] But the last five interpretations of Sāyana viz, those relating to lordship in the next world or heaven do not appear logical or plausible to us. It seems proper to take all these epithets or designations of sovereignty in the context of earthly lordship having nothing to do with heaven. Sāyaṇa explains the term Vairājya as 'distinction in rank from other rulers'. Peculiarly enough, Martin Haug takes the term to mean 'kingless state' from 'vi' (without) 'Rāj' (king) ; [23] but his contention is not borne out by the internal evidence of Br. texts. A monarch holding svārājya or Vairājya type of sway over the people was termed Svarāt or Virāt respectively. Thus Indra is called Virāt, Svarāt and Saṃrāt in the Atharvaveda (17-1-22). In R.V., A.V., S.B. etc., the term Virāt has been used in the sense of sovereign ruler. Eggeling translates the term as 'far ruler' in his work on the S.B. Keith translates the term 'Vairājya', as already pointed out, as 'Sovereignty'.

The A.B. (8-39-1) while enumerating these eleven types of monarchy mentions the last two as Sārvabhauma and Ekarāt instead of Svāvaśya and Ātiṣṭhatva. Sārvabhauma means overlord of all territory and Ekarāt as the very term signifies, means one single unrivalled ruler of the earth up to its extremities where the earth loses itself into the ocean. After such a long passage of time that separates us from the hoary antiquity of the Vedic age it is very difficult to form a clear-cut idea of the different types of kingship stated above. Indeed some designations are vague and baffle attempts at proper exposition.

While describing the great consecration or Mahābhiṣeka of Indra the A.B. 8-38-3 mentions the different territories

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22. Rājyaṃ deśādhipatyam. Sāmrājyaṃ dharmeṇa pālanam. Bhaujyaṃ bhogasamṛddhih..... ..... Ātiṣṭhatvaṃ cīrakāla-vāsitvam'.

23. Martin Haug : The A.B. of the Ṛgveda, Vol. II, page 518.

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and the respective kings thereof as illustrations of these different types of kingship. The importance of this passage can never be overestimated as it gives us the geographic features, names of different tribes and their kings which clearly outline the states ruled over and occupied by the Aryans in the later Vedic age. In the eastern quarter the kings of the eastern peoples (Prācya) were anointed for Sāmrājya or emperorship. They were called Samrāt. In the southern region the kings of the peoples known as Satvat were consecrated for Bhaujya ; they were designated Bhoja. In the western quarters the kings of the Nīcya and Apācya peoples or tribes were anointed for the Svārājya type of kingship ; they were called Svarāt. Towards the north the rulers of the territories known as Kuru and Madra which lay across the Himalaya mountain were consecrated for the Vairājya type of monarchy. In the central (Madhya) region the kings of the peoples known as Uśīnara and Kuru-Pañcāla along with those of Vaśa country were anointed for Rājya and were designated Rājā or king. Hence when a paramount sovereign is consecrated he attains the designation of Samrāt, Bhoja, Svarāt, Virāt, Rājā etc., with reference to the regions mentioned above. This chapter of the A.B. clearly states the names of countries and people where Vedic culture and Aryan civilisation infiltrated.

Different designations of monarchy in different parts of the country.

The S.B. quoting a verse of the Vājansaneyi Saṃhitā mentions the terms Svarāt, Satrarāt, Janarāt and Sarvarāt meaning self-ruler, ruler for a long period of time, ruler of the people and ruler of all respectively.[24] Eggeling translates Satrarāt as 'Ever ruling'. The term Satra does not mean 'eternal' or perpetual ; it signifies a long passage of time. Hence it seems proper to render the term as—"ruler for a long period of time'.[25] The Sarvarāt mentioned here corresponds to Sārvabhauma and Ekarāt mentioned above.

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24. V. S. 5-24—'Svarādasi sapatnahā, satrarādasi abhimātihā, janarādasi rakṣohā sarva-rādasi amitrahā'.

25. Eggeling : 'The Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa' 3-5-4-15.

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CHAPTER II

MONARCHAL AND IMPERIALISTIC SACRIFICES.

Some sacrifices have a purely political end-in-view such as the Rājasūya, Vājapeya, Aśvamedha, Bṛhaspatisava, Sautrāmaṇī, Puruṣamedha etc. These sacrifices are connected with kingship and paramount sovereignty. First we shall discuss the significance of the Rājasūya and Vājapeya sacrifices. The Rājasūya or 'inauguration of king' is a complex religious ceremony which includes amongst other rites the performance of a number of Soma-yāgas of different kinds. The Vājapeya which literally means "drink of strength' on the other hand, is recognized as one of the different forms Saṃsthās which a single soma-yāga may take. Both these sacrifices have a political bearing. A complete Soma-yāga consists of seven forms or Saṃsthās viz, Agniṣṭoma, Atyagniṣṭoma, Ukthya, Soḍaśī, Atirātra, Āptoryām and Vājapeya. Thus the last form or Saṃsthā is Vājapeya. The Rājasūya is a complex ceremony which, according to Śrauta Sūtra consists of a long succession of sacrificial performances, spread over a period of upwards of two years. It includes seven distinct Soma-yāgas, viz, Pavitra, an Agniṣṭoma as the starting sacrifice and followed by the Abhiṣecanīya, an Ukthya sacrifice, being the consecration or anointing ceremony. Then follows the Daśapeya, an agniṣṭoma, so-called because ten priests take part in drinking the Soma-juice contained in each of the ten cups. After another year's interval during which monthly offerings are made, takes place the Keśavapanīya or tonsure ceremony, an Atirātra sacrifice ; followed after a month, by the Vyuṣṭi-Dvirātra or two nights' ceremony, and finally the Kṣatra-dhṛti or the 'wielding of royal power', an Agniṣṭoma performed a month later. The round of ceremonies terminates with the Sautrāmaṇī, an iṣṭi, the object of which is to make amends for any excess committed in the consumption of liquor.

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The term Vājapeya is explained as drink of strength, 'Vāja' means strength and 'peya' drink. The S.B. 5-1-5-25 and 5-1-3-3 thus explains the Vājapeya, 'Vājapeya doubtless means the same as Annapeya, food and drink ; he who offers Vājapeya wins food'.[26] But the T.B. 1-3-2-3 explains the term'Vājapeya, as that through which the gods wished to obtain strength (Vājām).[27] Regarding the difference between the Rājasūya and the Vājapeya ceremonies or sacrifices it is said that one attains to kingship or becomes a king by performing the Rājasūya whereas by the performance of the Vājapeya one becomes a samrāt or emperor. Thus observes the S.B.—'One becomes Rājā or king by performing the Rājasūya sacrifice ; by performing the Vājapeya sacrifice one becomes a samrāt. Rājya is of a lower order, Sāmrājya is of a superior order. A Rājā or king longs to be an emperor (Samrāt). The emperor never desires to become a king because Rājya or kingship is inferior and Sāmrājya or emperorship is supreme (sovereignty)'.[28] This fact is reiterated in the S.B. 9-3-4-8 where it is distinctly stated that in the hierarchy of kingship the position of a samrāt is higher than that of a Rājā or king. It is the natural process of ascent when a king aspires to be an emperor but the reverse order is a process of descent and absurd. One should not perform the Rājasūya after performing the Vājapeya ; that would be a degradation or descent just as if one who was an emperor were to become a king.[29] Thus the above discussion proves that the Vājapeya is a

The Rājasūya and the Vājapeya.

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26. 'Annapeyaṃ ha vai nāmaitad yad vājāpeyam ; annaṃ vā eṣa ujjayati yo vājapeyena yajate.'

27. T.B. 1-3-2-3—'Taṃ vā etaṃ vājapeya ityāhuḥ. Vājapyo vā eśaḥ. Vājaṃ hyetena devā aipsan.'

28. 5-1-1-3—'Rājā vai rājasūyeneṣṭvā bhavati, samrād vājapeyena. Avaraṃ hi rājyaṃ paraṃ hi sāmrājyam. Kāmayate vai rājā samrād bhavitum ; na samrāt kāmayate rājā bhavitum'.

29. S.B. 9-3-4-8—'Vājapeyeneṣṭvā na rājasuyena yajeta pratyavarohaḥ sa yathā samrāt san rājā syāt tādṛk tat.'

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ceremony of superior value and import to the Rājasūya. Kātyāyana Śrauta sūtra also states (15-1-1-2) that the Rājasūya may be performed by a king who has not yet performed the Vājapeya. These two authorities the S.B. and K.S.S. prove the superiority of the Vājapeya to the Rājasūya but they do not, however, make any categorical assertion that the Rājasūya must be performed prior to the Vājapeya. The Rājasūya is a ceremony meant for the Kṣatriyas or military class alone whereas the Vājapeya could be performed by both Brahmins and Kṣatriyas. It was open to both the classes or castes. Thus Lāṭyāyana Śrauta sūtra (8-11-1), enjoins—'Whomsoever the Brahmins and kings may place at their head, let him perform the Vājapeyaḥ'.[30] The T.B. observes—'Brāhmaṇa-Kṣatriyayoreva Vājapeyaḥ, na vaiśyasya', i.e., the Vājapeya may be performed by a Brahmin or a Kṣatriya but not by a Vaiśya.

Divergence of views regarding the priority of the Rājasūya and the Vājapeya.

The S.B., as we have seen, clearly enjoins that the Rājasūya must precede the Vājapeya and not vice versa ; the order should not be reversed. Gopatha Br. also, while enumerating the order of sacrifices according to precedence and succession gives the Rājasūya precedence to Vājapeya. Rājasūya should follow the Agniṣṭoma, Vājapeya follows the Rājasūya, Aśavmedha follows the Vājapeya, Puruṣamedha the Aśvamedha and Sarvamedha the Puruṣamedha.....this is the order of succession of sacrifices'.[31] But, curiously enough, the Āśvalāyana Śrauta sūtra (11-9-19) lays down the rule that,—'after performing the Vājapeya, a king may perform the Rājasūya and a Brahmin, the Bṛhaspatisava'.[32] Bṛhaspatisava was a sacrifice similar to the Rājasūya performed for attaining supremacy with the difference that the former was meant for

30. 'Yaṃ brāhmaṇā rājānaśca puraskurvīran sa vājapeyena yajeta.'

31. G.B. (P)—'Agniṣṭomād Rājasūyo Rājasūyād vājapeyo vājapeyādaṣvamedhaḥ aṣvamedhāt Puruṣamedhaḥ Puruṣamedhāt sarvamedhaḥ.....te vā ete yajñakramāḥ.'

32. 'Vājapeyeneṣṭvā rājanyo rājasūyena yajeta, brāhmaṇo Bṛhaspatisavena yajeta.'

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Brāhmins whereas Kṣatriyas alone were eligible to perform the Rājasūya. The T.B. (2-7-6-1) calls the Vājapeya a samrātsava and Rājasūya a Varuṇasava,[33] the former meant a consecration to the dignity of a paramount sovereign whereas the latter signifies consecration to the universal sway wielded by Varuṇa. The S.B. also calls Rājasūya a Varuṇasava.[34]

The solution regarding the Vājapeya and the Rājasūya.

All the authorities with the exception of the S.B. and the K.S.S. are agreed in making the Vājapeya a preliminary ceremony to be performed by a Brāhmin who was raised to the dignity of a head-priest or by a king who was elected paramount sovereign by a number of petty kings and other representatives called king-makers (Rājakṛtaḥ); this sacrifice was followed in due time by the respective installation and anointing or consecration ceremony, viz, the Bṛhaspatisava, in the case of the priest or Purohita, and the Rājasūya in the case of a king or Kṣatriya. These authorities place the Bṛhaspatisava on a footing of equality with the Rājasūya. The S.B. finds itself in a critical position as it places the Rājasūya on a lower level than that of the Vājapeya but it tackles the problem with ingenuity to get out of the difficult situation. It solves the problem by simply identifying the Bṛhaspatisava with the Vājapeya and making the Vājapeya itself to be the consecration of Bṛhaspati; 'what is called Bṛhaspatisava is the same as the Vājapeya'.[35] Kātyāyana again solves the problem in a different manner. He effects a compromise by combining the two ceremonies—Bṛhaspatisava and Vājapeya in the following manner. He who performs the Vājapeya is to perform the Bṛhaspatisava for a fortnight before and after the Vājapeya.

Bṛhaspatisava.

The Bṛhaspatisava is so called because by this ceremony Bṛhaspati, the priest of gods and the chief adviser of the gods, attained pre-eminence and became the spiritual lord.

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33. 2-7-6-1—'Yo vai vājapeyaḥ sa samrātsavaḥ. Yo Rājasūyaḥ sa varuṇasavaḥ.'

34. 5-3-4-12—'Varuṇasavo vā eṣa yad Rājasūyam'.

35. S.B. 5-2-1-19—'Bṛhaspatisavo vā eṣa yad Vājapeyam'.

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Thus the Vājapeya ceremony at once stands for the temporal power or lordship of Kṣatriya and the spiritual lordship of the Brāhmaṇa. The S.B. and other authorities stated above mention Sāmrājya or paramount sovereignty as the result of Vājapeya. The T.B. again, mentions Svārājya or self-rule and supremacy as the effect of the Vājapeya ceremony. It (1-3-2-2, 3) states that Indra attained Svārājya and with it the lordship (jyaiṣṭhya) of the gods by performing the Vājapeya ; among human beings he who knowing this performs the Vājapeya attains Svārājya and becomes the chief of equals.[36]

Among the rites connected with the performance of the Vājapeya, Āji-dhāvana or chariot-race forms an interesting and novel item. The sacrificer or Yajamāna who, as stated above, must either be a Kṣatriya king or a Brāhmin priest is allowed to carry off the palm of victory. From the S.B. 5-1-5 we know that in this sacrifice seventeen drums were placed on the sacrificial altar and the priests had to sing beating those drums. The sound of seventeen drums (Dundubhi) beat simultaneously kept time with the march of stallions in the horse-race invariably connected with this ceremony. Many western indologists find in this chariot race a relic of a time-old national festival which, in the distant past, was a national inter-state tournament in which kings of different regions participated. The function had the appearance of a national Olympic festival.

The A. B. (7-33-4) mention the Rājasūya sacrifice performed by king Hariścandra. Sage Viśvāmitra was the Hotā, Jamadagni the Adhvaryu, Vaśiṣṭha the Brahmā and Ayāsya was the Udgātṛ-priest in that sacrifice.

Now we shall discuss the political bearing of the sacrifice called 'Aśvamedha' which gained wide celebrity in ancient

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36. 1-3-2-2—'(Indraḥ) so'graṃ devatānāṃ paryait. Agacchat svārājyam ; atiṣṭhantāsmai jyaiṣṭhyāya iti.'

S.B. 1-3-2-3—'Ya evaṃ vidvān vājapeyena yajate gacchati svārājyam ; agraṃ samānānāṃ paryeti-Tiṣṭhante asmai jyaiṣṭhyāya.'

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India. The S.B. calls Aśvamedha 'king of all sacrifices', 'the Bṛsabha of all sacrifices.'[37] 'The T. B. praises it as the Ṛṣabha of all Sacrifices' 'the universal lord of sacrifices', 'the lordly sacrifice.'[38] Those rulers who were not content with Rājya and Sāmrājya but aspired to be unrivalled paramount sovereign termed Sārvabhauma had to perform the Aśvamedha. The Āpastamba Śrauta sūtra (20-1-1) enjoins that the Aśvamedha should be performed by a Sārvabhauma or a non-paramount sovereign.[39] The thirteenth kāṇda of the S.B. deals with the origin, procedure, details and rituals of the Aśvamedha. The A.B. does not discuss any other sacrifice except Soma-yāga. Enumerating the results that accrue to the performance of Aśvamedha the S.B. observes—'One who performs the Aśvamedha conquers all the quarters ; conquers the world, the priest makes him a ruler and upholder'.[40] He attains everything who performs the Aśvamedha ; it is the expiation of all (crimes) ; it is the medicine of all, i.e., universal panacea'.[41] 'If a Rājanya performs the horse-sacrifice, he becomes a great fighter'.[42] 'He acquires all kingdoms, all peoples, all the Vedas, all the gods and all created beings.'[43]

Aśvamedha or the horse-sacrifice.

Effect of the horse-sacrifice.

Before the actual performance of the Aśvamedha the sacrificial horse is let loose to roam over the whole country from place to place. From certain marks on its person and its

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37. 13-2-2-1—'Rājā vā eṣa yajñānāṃ yadaśvamedhaḥ.'
13-1-2-2—'Bṛṣabha eṣa yajñānāṃ yadaśvamedhaḥ.'

38. 3-8-3-3—'Ṛṣabha eṣa yajñānāṃ yadaśvamedhaḥ.'
3-9-19-1—'Eṣa (Aśvamedhaḥ) bibhurnāma yajñaḥ.' Eṣa Prabhurnāma yajñaḥ.

39. 'Rājā vā sārvabhaumo 'śvamedhena yajeta. Apyasārvabhaumaḥ.'
3-9-19-1—Eṣa (Aśvamedhaḥ) Prabhurnāma yajñaḥ.'

40. 13-1-2-3—'Aśvamedhayājī sarvā diśo'bhijayati bhuvanaṃ jayati.....yantāramevainaṃ dhartāraṃ karoti.'

41. S.B. 13-3-1-1—'Yo'śvamedhena yajate sarva eva bhavati sarvasya vā eṣa prāyaścittiḥ sarvasya bheṣajam.'

42. S.B. 13-3-7-9—'Yatrāitena yajñena yajanta ā rājanyo'tivyādhī jāyate.'

43. S.B. 13-4-3-15—'Sarvāṇi rājyānyācaṣte sarvā diśaḥ sarvān vedān sarvān devān sarvāṇi bhūtāni.....aśnute.'

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attendants people and kings of other states can easily recognise it to be a sacrificial horse. It is a challenge to all the contemporary ruling chiefs, princes and monarchs. If anyone seizes the horse it means he opposes or stands in the way of the sacrificer's attaining paramount sovereignty. In that case the attendants of the horse fight with that king who seizes the horse. If they fail to defeat him and win back the horse the sacrificer cannot perform the Aśvamedha. A large number of royal attendants consisting of various types of fighters numbering five hundred heads guard the sacrificial horse and follow in its wake all over the country prepared for any eventuality. It is their sacred duty to protect the horse from all dangers and calamities, and bring it back unscathed to the sacrificer. The varied and large number of attendants forms a part of the royal paraphernalia bespeaking the military strength of the king. The S.B. thus enumerates the list of attendants : 'a hundred royal princes clad in armour ; a hundred warriors armed with swords ; a hundred sons of heralds and headmen bearing quivers fitted with arrows ; a hundred sons of attendants and charioteers bearing staves—and a hundred exhausted, worn out horses amongst which, having let loose that (sacrificial) horse they guard it'.[44] This passage is important as it gives us a clear idea regarding the different classes of fighters and also the names of different missiles, weapons, armours used by them in an era of such hoary antiquity. From the list of attendants of the sacrificial horse it is clear that people belonging to the rank of both the nobility and the common people are picked up to form the complete battalion to guard the horse. Thus Rājaputrāḥ or royal princes and Rājanyāḥ or warriors belonging to the military or ruling class belong to the order of nobles of which the princes form the first order and warriors the second order. The remaining four classes of attendants or fighters viz, sons of Sūtas or heralds and Grāmaṇīs or headmen of villages and sons of attendants and charioteers belong to the common people of which the former two bespeaks a higher and the latter two a lower rank in the social hierarchy.

Details of the Aśvameda.

44. 13-4-2-5—'Tasyaite purastād rakṣitāra upakḷptā bhavanti : Rājaputrāḥ kavacināḥ śatam rājanyā.....yasmin enamapi sṛjya rakṣanti.'

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Every sacrifice has to be performed by the sacrificer along with his wife jointly. A widower or a bachelor cannot perform any sacrifice as a rule though there are provisions for the performance of Agnihotra daily even if one's wife passed away during his lifetime. In the Aśvamedha also the monarch has to perform the sacrifice with the help of his queens. The queens play an important role in the ceremony and take active part in various performances. Not only the chief queen called Mahiṣī but all the four queens have to attend the ceremony with retinue and equipments bespeaking their queenly status. The queens have to decorate the horse, caress it, lie down by its side and perform various rites connected with the sacrifice. 'The four wives of the king come with four hundred female attendants and a young maiden to wash the feet of the horse'.[45] Of the four queens each is followed by a hundred female attendants differing in rank and dress making four hundred in all. Thus the chief queen called Mahiṣī is attended by hundred princesses (Rājaputrī) of royal family.'[46] 'The favourite queen called vāvātā is attended by a hundred females of royal descent (Rājanyā).'[47] The childless and barren and hence discarded or neglected wife of the king called parivṛktā is attended by daughters of heralds (sūta) and headmen of villages (Grāmaṇī) comprising hundred in all.'[48] The fourth wife called Pālāgalī who is inferior to the other three queens in social rank is attended by a hundred females who happen to be daughters of chamberlains and charioteers.'[49] This passage of the S.B. and this function at once bespeak the constitutional status and dignity of the queens in the Vedic age and the gorgeous paraphernalia befitting their status. As in the case of the attendants of the sacrificial horse here also we find a

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45. S.B. 13-5-2-1—'Patuyaḥ pānnejanairudāyanti catasra jāyāh kumārī pañcamī catvāri ca śatāni anucarīṇām.'

46. S.B. 13-5-2-5—'Tasyai śataṃ rājputryaḥ anucaryo bhavanti.'

47. S.B. 13-5-2-6—'Tasyai śataṃ rājanyā anucaryo bhavanti.'

48. S.B. 13-5-2-7—'Tasyai śataṃ sūtagrāmaṇyā duhitaro' nucaryo bhavanti.'

49. S.B. 13-5-2-8—'Tasyai śataṃ kṣātrasamgrahītṛṇāṃ duhitaro 'nucaryo bhavanti.'

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distinct grade bespeaking social hierarchy amongst the attendants ranging from those of the fourth queen Pālāgalī to those of the chief queen Mahiṣī. The S.B. 13-5-4 furnishes a long list of kings who performed the horse-sacrifice along with the names of their priests. Thus the priest Indrota Daivāpa Śaunaka performed this sacrifice for king Janamejaya Parikṣita who bound for the gods a black-spotted horse adorned with a golden ornament and yellow garlands. Three more kings belonging to the line of Parikṣita viz,—Bhimasena, Ugrasena and Śrutasena performed this sacrifice. The commentator Harisvāmin takes these kings to be brothers of Parikṣit. The Kauśalya king Para Ātnāra, son of king Atnāra, king Purukutsa born of Ikṣāku race, the Ayogava king Marutta Āvikṣita, The Pañcāla king Kraivya, Ddhvasā Dvaitavana, the king of the Matsyas performed the Aśvamedha or horse-sacrifice. King Bharata Dauḥṣyanti performed this sacrifice, and attained the vast territory and wide sway which belonged to the line of Bharata. Seventy-eight (78) steeds did he bind for the sacrifice on the banks of the river Yamunā, and fifty-five steeds near the Ganges. Thus he bound one hundred and thirty-three horses in all and conquered the whole earth overcoming his adversaries in no time. There is a Gāthā or laudatory verse attached to the horse sacrifice of every king. One such Gāthā eulogising the glorious deeds of king Bharata says that once he performed the horse-sacrifice with a thousand steeds and no king on earth who preceded or followed him could attain his greatness. King Ṛṣabha Yājñatura of the Sviknas, śona sātrāsāha the Pañcāla king also performed the horse-sacrifice. There are illustrations of one king seizing the sacrificial horse let loose by another king. For example, king Śatānīka Sātrājita seized the white sacrificial horse let loose by king Dhṛtarāṣtra roaming at will in its tenth month and performed the horse-sacrifice with that horse.

Illustrations of horse-sacrifices performed by various rulers.

The Coronation Ceremony :

The consecration or anointing ceremony of king-designates called Abhiṣeka or Mahābhiṣeka forms a part of the Rājasūya sacrifice and is of supreme importance as a record of various

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aspects of monarchy and imperialism that obtained in the later Vedic age. This ceremony is mentioned in the Atharva Veda and the different Brāhmaṇa texts. The Abhiṣeka or Abhiṣecanīya literally means 'sprinkling', as a main item of the ceremony consists in sprinkling the king with holy waters collected from different sacred rivers and seas.

Details of the consecration ceremony.

The consecration ceremony consists of five days, viz, one Dīkṣā (initiation ceremony), three upasads, and one sutyā or soma-day, the particular form of soma-sacrifice being the Ukthya. The initiation or Dīkṣā is performed immediately after the expiration of the dark fortnight following the full moon of Phālguna on the first day of Caitra. The rites and rituals connected with this ceremony are best described in the S.B. 5-3 and 5-4. On the first day offerings are made to eight deities—Savitā, Agni, Soma, Bṛhaspati, Indra, Rudra, Mitra and Varuṇa. These eight gods are called 'Devasus' or 'Divine Quickeners' and each has an epithet of his own. While offering the oblations each is invoked along with his epithet which bespeaks one or other aspect of royal prerogatives, duties and functions. Thus Savitā is invoked as 'Satyaprasava' for true impulse or righteous energy of the king, Agni as Gṛhapati for mastery of the household, Soma as Vanaspati for the protection of forests and Agriculture, Bṛhaspati Vāk for power of speech, Indra as Jyeṣṭha for supremacy or predominance in matters of administration, Rudra as Paśupati for protection of cattle, Mitra as Satya for truth, and lastly offering to Varuṇa the moral governor as Dharmapati for upholding of Dharma or law.[50] Thus each epithet is applied with an eye to each prerogative or duty of the King-designate. The last epithet viz, that of Varuṇa makes the king upholder of law or one who enforces law and order. The various qualifications and manifold obligations of kingship are symbolised by the said offerings. Commenting on the term 'Dharmapati', observes Dr. R. K. Mukherji—'The Hindu theory regards Dharma, or Law, as the real sovereign,

The king as upholder of law.

50. S.B. 5-3-3-11—'Savitā tvā savānāṃ suvatamagnirgṛhapatīnāṃ somo vanaspatīnām. Bṛhaspatiḥ..... Varuṇo dharmapatīnām'.

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and the king as Daṇḍa or the executive to support and enforce Dharma.[51] After the offering of oblations the priests utter the following hymn. "Quicken him O Gods, to be unrivalled", he thereby says—'Quicken him, O Gods, so as to be without an enemy', 'for great chiefdom', 'for great lordship', 'for man-rule'.[52] Here Jana-rājya means lordship over human beings. Dr. U. N. Ghosal observes—"We suggest it to mean 'rule over the whole folk' as distinguished from 'rule over the single tribe'.[53] After uttering these hymns relating to royal duties and powers the priests declare—'This person is your king, soma is the king of us, Brahmins'.[54] This declaration is followed by the Abhiṣeka or Sprinkling ceremony. Holy waters collected from seventeen different sources consisting of rivers, pools, wells, dew-drops, floods, rain-water, seas etc..... are collected and mixed together in a vessel made of the wood of Udumvara tree (Ficus Glomerata) and the king is sprinkled with these holy waters. Amongst rivers Sarasvatī occupied that position in the Vedic age which is occupied by the Ganges in the post-Vedic age from the point of sanctity.

Proclamation of Kingship.

Each type of water symbolises some power or character of the king. Thus Sarasvati, as we learn from the S.B. 5-3-4, symbolises speech, gift of the gab, the flowing river symbolises vigour, flood stands for plenty, sea for dominion and the pool or tank for loyalty of the people to the monarch, which should be sincere and harmless like the waters of a stagnant pool. The sprinkling is done jointly by a Brāhmaṇa (adhvaryu), a Kṣatriya, and also by a Vaiśya. The sprinkling vessel differs in the case of each caste. At first all the holy waters are mixed together in a vessel made of Udumvara wood. Then that mixed consecration water is distributed into four smaller vessels made of woods of Palāśa,

The sprinkling of holy waters.

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51. 'Hindu Civilisation', Chapter V, under 'Conditions of Coronation.'

52. S.B. 5-3-3-12—'Imaṃ 'devāḥ asapatnaṃ suvaddhamitīmaṃ devā abhrātṛvyaṃ.....mahate kṛatrāya mahate jyaiṣṭhyāya.....mahate jānarājyāya.'

53. 'The Beginnings of Indian Historiography & other Essays', pp. 257.

54. S.B. 5-3-3-12—'Eṣa vomī rājā somo' smākaṃ brāhmaṇānāṃ rājā.'

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Udumvara, Nyagrodha or banyan (ficus Indica) and Aśvattha or ficus religiosa trees respectively. The Brāhmaṇa sprinkles on the king-elect from the Palāśa vessel, a relation of the king sprinkles from Udumvara vessel. He may be a brother or a near relation. A friendly king, i.e., an ally (Mitra Rājanya) sprinkles from a Nyagrodha vessel and the Vaiśya sprinkles from an Aśvattha vessel.

The consecration ceremony relating to the coronation is regarded as a new birth of the king. Hence he is made to wear new garments, an under-garment called Tārpya, a garment made of undyed wool (Pāṇḍva), a mantle or cloak (Adhivāsa) and a head-band (Uṣṇīṣa). As this ceremony is regarded as a new birth these garments are symbolic of different parts of an embryo. Thus the tārpya stands for amnion (Ulva), Pāṇḍva for uterus or chorion (Jarāyu), Adhivāsa for womb (Yoni) and Uṣnīṣa or head-band for the navel or umbilicus. Then the Adhvaryu priest strings a bow and hands over the same to the king with three arrows. The bow is a symbol of strength, vigour and government. The priest says, —'the bow is a symbol of the king's strength or military power and I shall consecrate him after he attains strength.'[55] While explaining the significance of different kinds of waters the S.B. 5-3-4-5 states that by this sprinkling or consecration the king is made both the lord and the offspring of the people. This is his new birth and the representatives of the people and nobility have to accord sanction to his ascending the throne. Hence he is an offspring in these two senses and the ceremony makes him lord of the people.

Consecration regarded as a new birth.

The king is both the lord and offspring of the people.

There is an oath-taking ceremony at this stage. The priests who anoint or sprinkle holy waters on the king address him thus—'If you do me harm, in that case all the merits

55. S.B. 5-3-5-30—'Vṛryaṃ vā etad rājanyasya yaddhanurvīryavantamabhiṣiñcānīti'.

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acquired by you from the night of your birth to the night of your demise, your pious deeds, longevity and issue will be stolen by me.'[56] Accordingly the king takes the oath—'If I betray you or play you false, may I lose the merit of all my pious deeds, religious rites, gifts, my position, life and even my progeny.'[57]

Oath-taking.

The king is made to step on a tiger's skin as the tiger is the king of beasts. A small gold plate is placed below the king's foot and another gold plate is laid on his head. Gold symbolises immortality ; thus immortality is bestowed on the king both from below and from above. The priest 'thus encloses him with immortal life on both sides.'[58] Following this the king is made to mount a chariot yoked with four horses with bow and arrows in hand. The king discharges one arrow to mark the goal of the chariot-race. As to why he shoots one arrow the S.B. (5-1-5-14) states that the king is a manifestation of Prajāpati, the lord of creatures. Prajāpati is one but he rules over the whole creation or many created beings ; likewise the king, though one, rules over many. (Eṣa vai Prajāpateḥ pratyakṣatamaṃ yad rājanyastasmādekaḥ san vahūnāmiṣṭe). The chariot goes round all the directions within the sacrificial campus bespeaking victory of all the quarters.

Rites symbolical of royal power.

The chariot-race being over, the king and his wife mount the sacrificial post. This mounting on the sacrificial post bespeaks their approximation to the gods. Ascending the post the king says—'We have become Prajāpati's children' (S.B. 5-2-1-11, 'Prajāpateḥ prajā abhūma'). He who performs the Vājapeya sacrifice becomes the child of Prajāpati and as such becomes immortal. Thus the sacrificer attains the immortality of gods and sonship of Prajāpati.

The royal couple monnts the sacrificial post.

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56. A.B. 8-39-1—'Yāṃca rātrīmajāyethā yāṃca pretāsi tadubhayamantareṇa.....yadi me druhyuḥ.'

57. A.B. 8-39-1—'Yāṃ ca rātrīmajāye' haṃ yāṃ ca..... .....yadi te druhyeyam.'

58. S.B. 5-4-1-14—'Amṛtamāyurhiraṇyaṃ tadamṛtenaivainaṃ..... .....tasmād rukmā ubhayato bhavataḥ'.

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Thus the Vedic kingship though of human origin is vested with divine glory on account of the sacrificial performance.

The king looks at the mother earth and says—'O mother Earth, injure me not, nor I thee'. The Earth is afraid of the king-initiate thinking, "Something great surely has he become now that he has been consecrated ; I fear lest he may rend me asunder'. The king is also afraid of the Earth, and thus muses—'I fear lest she may shake me off'. Hence he thereby enters into a friendly relation with her ; for a mother does not injure her son, nor does a son injure his mother.[59] After establishing this friendly relation with mother Earth the king alights from the chariot and steps on the ground.

Covenant between the king and mother Earth.

A game of dice is a compulsory part of the consecration ceremony. The game is played with five dice, four of which are called Kṛta while the fifth is termed Kali. If all the dice when thrown fall uniformly i.e., with the dotted sides either upwards or downwards the thrower wins. The king-elect is always favoured with the winning throw symbolising his conquest of all castes and all regions.

Symbolical game of dice.

The throne called Āsandī is made of Khadira or acacia catechu wood. According to the S.B. it is to be made of Khadira or acacia catechu wood but according to the A.B. it is to be made of Udumvara (Ficus Glomerata) wood with its four legs measuring one span each in length. The planks for the head piece and two sides should measure one 'Aratni' or two spans each. Aratni is the portion of human hand stretching from the wrist to the elbow. The texture of the seat should be woven of Muñjā fibres and the throne is to be covered with a tiger-skin symbolic of kingship, tiger being the king of beasts. The throne is a symbol of royal dignity and power. 'It is a symbol of dominion.'[60] 'Imperial dig-

The throne.

59. S.B. 5-4-3-20, 21—'Pṛthivirmātarmā mā hiṃsīr mā ahaṃ tvāṃ'(20). 'Pṛthivī u haitasmād bibheti mahad vā ayamabhūd..... .....na hi mātā putraṃ hinasti na putro mātaram.'

60. S.B. 12-8-3-6—'Rāṣṭraṃ vāsandī.'

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nity is established on a throne.'[61] A tiger-skin is spread on the ground before the throne. When the formalities are gone through and consecration rites performed, the king-designate duly sanctified ascends the throne. The priest declares him as the sovereign and terms him a precious gem to be protected by the people. Addressing the king the priest says—'To thee this State (Rāṣṭra) is given, for agriculture, for the common good, for prosperity and nourishment.' Thus the kingdom is offered to the king as a sacred trust not for exploitation or self-aggrandisement but for the promotion of peace and prosperity of subjects, for the common good. This fact goes to prove the democratic ideal of kingship notwithstanding the hereditary character of succession. The administrators or monarchs of the Vedic age thoroughly realised the truth that the prosperity of a state lay in the sense of security in the people's mind, in the common good. 'The cool (i.e., mainstay) of royal power', remarks the S. B., 'is, doubtless, security of possession or common good.'[62] The same idea finds expression in the T.B.[63]

The king is the custodian of the kingdom which is a sacred trust.

When the king is seated on the throne the priest touching the chest of the king mutters—'He hath sat down, the upholder of sacred law and order.' Verily the king is the upholder of the sacred law, for he is not capable of all and every speech, nor of all and every deed ; he should speak only what is right and do the right deed alone.'[64] Amongst men the Brāhmaṇa versed in the sacred lore called Śrotriya and the king—these two are the custodians of the sacred law.[65] This reference bespeaks the high moral status and dignity of the king. 'This passage', observes Dr. U. N. Ghosal, 'by attaching the notion of unrivalled moral greatness to the king alone with the learned

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61. S.B. 12-8-3-4—'Āsandīsad vai sāmrājyam.'

62. S.B. 13-2-9-5—'Kṣemo vai rāṣṭrasya sītam.'

63. T.B. 3-9-7-2—'Kṣemo vai rāṣṭrasya sīto vātaḥ.'

64. S.B. 5-4-4-5—'Dhṛtavrata vai rājā, na vā eṣa sarvasmā iva vadanāya sarvasmā iva karmaṇe yadeva sādhu vadet yat sādhu kuryāt.'

65. S.B. 5-4-4-5—'Eṣa ca śrotriyaścaitau ha vai dvau manuṣyeṣu dhṛtavratau'.

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Brāhmaṇa, marks a distinct phase in the evolution of Vedic kingship. The Vedic king, according to this view, is the embodiment of the moral law, being matched only by the learned Brāhmaṇa.'[66] Not that the king cannot commit any wrong but he should not do any wrong or speak any evil or untruth. Falsehood, evil thought or deed, meanness, malice etc., fall far below the standard of imperial dignity. The king must be above all these pettiness and meanness.

High moral status and dignity of the ruler.

At this stage an important rite takes place which makes the king immune or bespeaks his immunity from trial and judicial punishment. The priests take up sticks and silently strike the king on his back with those sticks (Daṇḍa). 'By striking him with sticks they take him beyond the pale of judicial punishment ; hence the king is exempt from or beyond the reach of punishment.'[67] From this statement one should not arrive at a hasty but wrong conclusion that the king could turn into a veritable tyrant or oppressor because he was beyond the reach of judicial punishment. The exhortations of the priests addressed to the king that he should not do any wrong or utter anything evil and untrue give the lie to such hasty conclusion exposing its slipshod logic and flagrant fallacy.

The king is exempted from judicial punishment.

The divine right or, strictly speaking, the demi-divinity of the king is apparent from the above observations. He is almost identified with Indra, the king of gods just as his chief adviser the Brāhmaṇa priest or minister is identified with Bṛhaspati, the spiritual and political guide of Indra. But these similes or observations are more metaphorical than literal. In the Br. texts parallelisms are always drawn between divine rites and human rites because all worldly sacrifices and rites are but imitations of heavenly ones performed by the gods.

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66. The Beginnings of Indian Historiography and other Essays', pp. 268.

67. S.B. 5-4-4-7—'Taṃ daṇḍairghanto daṇḍavadhamatinayanti tasmād rājā adaṇḍyo yadenaṃ daṇḍavadhamatinayanti'.

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Demi-divinity of the king. Metaphors should not be made much of.

Thus sacrificial and liturgical practices of human beings are copies of their divine archetype. In the case of the coronation ceremony the priests consecrate the earthly king in the same manner following the same procedure in which Bṛhaspati, the priest of gods consecrated Indra, the king of gods during the latter's coronation ceremony. Let us take the particular ceremony of sprinkling holy waters on the king's head as an instance in point. The priest while sprinkling the king with the sacred waters says—'I am sprinkling you with the same waters with which Prajāpati, the creator, consecrated the heavenly kings viz, Indra, Soma, Varuṇa, Yama and Manu. May you be an overlord amongst earthly kings in this world.'[68]

Sword as a mark of royal power.

After the game of dice is over a Brāhmaṇa hands over a sacrificial wooden sword to the king as a mark of royal power and military strength. The sword is regarded as Indra's thunderbolt. This is recorded in the S.B. 5-4-4. The king, in his turn, hands over the sword to his brother who hands it over to Sūta. The Sūta, again, hands over the same to the Grāmaṇī, village headman. The Grāmaṇī, in his turn hands it over to a Sajāta, a tribesman. Every receiver of the sword becomes weaker than the giver. Thus the king or Ksatriya is made weaker than the Brāhmaṇa who offers the sword to the king ; the king's brother is made weaker than the king, Sūta is made weaker than the king's brother, Grāmaṇī from the Sūta and the Sajāta from the Grāmaṇī. This gradual inferiority or deficiency in power is intended for the proper functioning of the body politic. The Brāhmaṇa priest while handing over the sword to the king makes the king

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68. A.B. 8-37-3—

'Yābhirindramabhyaṣiñcat Prajāpatiḥ somaṃ
rājānaṃ Varuṇaṃ Yamaṃ Manuṃ.
Tābhiradbhirabhiṣiñcāmi tvāmahaṃ rājñāṃ
tvamadhirājo bhaveha.'

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weaker than Brāhmaṇa but stronger than the king's enemies, says the S.B. 5-4-4-15. But in the actual sprinkling ceremony we find, as stated in the S.B. 5-4-2-7—'the priest pours the remainder of the holy waters into the Brāhmaṇa's vessel ; he thereby makes the Brāhmaṇa an object of respect after the king'. We can tide over these apparent contradictory statements by concluding that the king was temporally superior to the Brāhmaṇa and the Brāhmaṇa was spiritually superior to the king. The Sajāta prepares the gaming ground with that sword. Eggeling in his footnote on the S.B. 5-4-4-19 thus comments on the term Sajāta—"The Sajāta would seem to be one of the peasant proprietors or 'sharers' constituting the 'village brotherhood' ruled over by the headman, and often actually belonging to the same family as the latter".

The important part played by the king-makers.

In the consecration ceremony the different representatives of the nobility and common people have to give their consent to the accession of the king-elect to the throne. As these representatives of the nobles and commons have a voice in choosing the king they are called Rājakṛtaḥ, or Rājakartṛ, i.e., king-makers. It is only with the express consent of the king-makers that a king can ascend the throne, i.e., become a king. If they do not accord sanction or disallow the king cannot be declared as king. He will have to abdicate in favour of his son or relation chosen by the king-makers. This fact is recorded in clear and unmistakable terms in the Br. texts. 'Only he becomes king', observes the S.B., 'whom the (other) kings allow to assume the royal dignity, but not he whom they do not allow to do so'.[69] The same fact is corroborated by the P.B. which states—'He, forsooth, may be called a king, who is made a king by them, i.e., king-makers'.[70] Amongst the king-maker, the kings had the strongest voice, the most effective

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69. S.B. 9-4-1-13 and 9-3-4-5—'Yasmai vai rājāno rājyamanumanyante sa rājā bhavati, na sa yasmai na.'

70. P.B. 19-1—'Te tu vai rājeti vadeyuryaṃ ha rājā rājānaṃ ha kuryāt.'

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say in the matter of the selection of king-elect. The king-makers are also called Ratnins i.e., keepers of jewel, the king being the jewel. They acted as the king's ministers or counsellors. For the purpose of the coronation ceremony they are termed Ratnins. There is a ceremony connected with the Rājasūya sacrifice known as "Ratna-haviṣ" iṣṭi which is a prelude to the actual consecration or anointing ceremony. In this ceremony the king-designate goes to the house of each king-maker or Ratnin and offers an oblation at his place in honour of a particular deity. They are called Ratnins because they are like precious gems in the royal crown.

Popular element in the coronation ceremony.

From the details of the 'Ratna-haviṣ' ceremony we can gather the list of king-makers which varies according to the texts of different Brāhmaṇas. The S.B. 5-3-1 enumerates the details of this ceremony and the order of merit of the king-makers following which the king goes to their houses. Thus according to the S.B. there are eleven Ratnins or king-makers serially arranged according to their social status in the following manner—Senānī or Commander-in-chief, Purohita or family priest, yajamāna, chief queen or consecrated queen called Mahiṣī, Sūta, i.e., chronicler or court-minstrel, Grāmaṇī or headman of the village, kṣattṛ or chamberlain, Saṃgrahītṛ or treasurer, Bhāgadugha or tax-collector, Aksāvāpa or superintendent of dice (gambling), Govikarta or huntsman, Pālāgala or courier. Each king-maker or Rāja-kṛt is described as 'one jewel of the king'. Though we find twelve persons in this list, the S.B. states that Akṣāvāpa and Govikarta, i.e., superintendent of the dice and the huntsman, though two individuals should be taken as one jewel. 'These two, while being two jewels (of the king), he makes one for the purpose of completeness.'[71] Each day the king goes to the house of one king-maker or Ratnin. Thus eleven days are required to complete the circuit. On the twelfth day he goes to the house of the discarded wife called Parivṛtti and offers an oblation to goddess Nirṛiti. But

Ratna-havis ceremony.

71. S.B. 5-3-1-10—'Te vā ete dve satī ratne ekaṃ karoti sampadaḥ kāmāya ;.....asyaikam ratnaṃ yadakṣāvāpaśca Govikartaśca.'

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this discarded wife is not treated as a jewel in the S.B. ; hence she falls outside the list of eleven Ratnins. This list of king-makers slightly varies according to different Brāhmaṇas, there being additions and alterations. The list enumerated in the T.B. is almost identical with that of the S.B. with the only exception that the huntsman (Govikarta) and courier (Pālāgala) are not mentioned. To the list given in the S.B. Maitrāyaṇi Saṃhitā (2-6-5) adds Takṣā or carpenter, and Rathakāra or chariotwright. In the case of village headman or Grāmaṇī it adds a qualifying adjunct Vaiśyāgrāmaṇī. The nucleus of king-makers which had swelled in bulk in the later Vedic age is met with in the Atharva-veda which mentions only five Ratnins viz,—Rathakāra, karmāra or artisan, Grāmaṇī, the village headman and other kings comprising nobles, chieftains, subsidiary kings and relations of the king-elect. These Ratnins are not kings but king-makers, as the S.B. repeatedly calls them. The M.S. (4-3-8) states 'these, (king-makers) are the limbs of the king and the kingdom of that king whose ratnins are vigorous also becomes vigorous'.[72] Jayswal in his 'Hindu Polity' (Part I, pp. 20-21) calls these ratnins 'high functionaries of the state selected on the principle of class and caste-representation'. Thus the priest or Brāhmaṇa represented the Brahmanical class, the Senānī, Rājanyas and the chief queen, Mahiṣī represented the military or ruling class, Grāmaṇī, Rathakāra etc., the Vaiśya community and Jayswal takes Akṣāvāpa and Govikarta to represent the Śūdra community. Though it is not explicitly stated in the Br. or Śrauta sūtra texts that the last two belonged to the Śūdra class one may infer them to be Śūdras judging from their social status and profession.

The list of king-makers gradually swelled in bulk as ages rolled by.

The order of merit of the Ratnins also differs in the different Saṃhitā and Br. texts. The S.B. alone places Senānī or commander first in the list, second and third being Purohita and Mahiṣī while the Brāhmaṇa tops the list in all other Saṃhitās and Brāhmaṇas, Senānī being placed fifth in the M.S.

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72. 'Kṣatrasya vā etānyaṅgāni, yasya vā etāni tejasvini bhavanti tadrāṣtraṃ tejasvi bhavati.'

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and the T.S., and sixth in the T.B. From this difference it appears that while the S.B. attaches greater importance to the military aspect of the govt. other texts underrate it laying greater stress on the civil aspect. Except times of danger or warfare, as a rule, the civil branch of administration was given greater importance than the military branch in the Vedic age.

The order of merit of the king-makers.

From the above discussion it is abundantly clear that kingship in the Vedic or later Vedic age was a far cry from absolute despotism, autocracy or dictatorship. A faint note of democracy may be traced in the voice of the nobility and common people in choosing their king, in the dependence of the king on king-makers who formed the cabinet, in the conditions imposed upon the king at the time of coronation and in the administrative organisations called Sabhā and Samiti which voiced the opinion of the people. But this democratic element must not be made much of or the conclusions should not be pressed too far. Notwithstanding these traces of democratic element there is no denying the fact that kingship was hereditary and the general convention was succession by law of primogeniture. Any and every man could not be made a king or one belonging to non-military-class had no right to the throne. In the heaven or on earth the first king had to be chosen and elected by the people but later on kingship became hereditary and the practices that took place during election of the first king became conventional and were observed in the consecration of every monarch as a formality. The hereditary character of monarchy is also proved from other references met with in the Br. texts. The S.B. 12-9-3-1 to 12-9-3-13 recounts the anecdote of Sṛñjaya king called Duṣtarītu Pauṃsāyana whose kingdom was inherited by him through ten continuous generations. The A.B. also refers to Daśapuruṣaṃ Rājyam. The term Rājaputra is also frequently found referring to king's sons as future successors to the throne. Hence it can be safely con-

Kingship of the later Vedic age is a far cry from that of the early Vedic age.

Presence of king-makers was a formality. Kingship was hereditary in character.

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cluded that the monarchy was normally hereditary. In the coronation ceremony, the king is addressed as 'the father of king among the kings' as stated in the A.B. along with other epithets. This fact also lends support to the view of hereditary succession. Of course, in times of emergency or unforeseen national calamity the Viśaḥ or people who constituted the rāṣṭra (national unit) could select a worthy king fit to rise to the occasion and meet the situation from among the members of the royal family or the nobility.

Proofs in favour of hereditary kingship.

The A.B. 8-39 records the coronation ceremony of many kings who ruled over different parts of India in the Vedic age. The names of the kings consecrated along with their priests who anointed them are mentioned. Thus, the priest Tura Kāvaṣeya consecrated king Janamejaya, son of Parikṣhit. Cyāvana Bhārgava consecrated king Śāryāta, a descendant of Manu ; Somaśuṣmā, son of Vājaratna anointed king Śatānīka Sātrājita ; sages Parvata and Nārada consecrated king Āmvāṣṭhya and also king Yudhāṃśrauṣṭi Augrasenya ; Kaśyapa anointed king Viśvakarmā Bhauvana ; Vaśiṣṭha consecrated king Sudās Paijavana ; sage Saṃvarta Āngirasa consecrated king Marutta Āvikṣita ; sage Udamaya, son of Atri, anointed king Aṅga and the latter made a gift of ten thousand elephants, ten thousand maid-servants decorated with gold ornaments, ten millions of cows, eighty-seven thousand white stallions to the former out of gratitude. Sage Dīrghatamā consecrated king Bharata, son of Duṣmanta who conquered the earth and performed one hundred and thirty-three Aśvamedha sacrifices. Every one of these consecrated kings conquered the earth and performed Aśvamedha sacrifice as a mark of their supreme sovereignty.

Illustrations of coronation ceremony ; names of kings and priests.

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BOOK II

CHAPTER III

THE CABINET AND THE ADMINISTRATIVE ORGANISATIONS

Ministers :—

The Rājakṛtaḥ or king-makers called Ratnins mentioned above in connection with Ratna-havis ceremony formed the Mantri-pariṣad or the cabinet of the king. They were the king's counsellors and the king had to depend on them for guidance and good counsel. The priest, the commander-in-chief, subsidiary kings and the chief queen held important positions in the cabinet. The rural unit was represented by the village headman called Grāmaṇī. The king looked upon each member of the cabinet or each king-maker as his faithful follower. The king became eligible for consecration when each Ratnin had accorded sanction ; hence he regarded each of them as his staunch supporter. 'It is for him that he is thereby consecrated', says the S.B., 'and him he makes his own faithful follower'.[73] The senānī or commander was in charge of military affairs, the karmāra was in charge of industry, the Rathakāra and the Sūta were in charge of different aspects of military organisation ; the Saṃgrahītṛ was in charge of treasury and the Bhāgadugha was entrusted with the collection of taxes and revenue. The superintendent of dice or Akṣāvāpa was a public officer who superintended the gambling halls of the state and collected the revenue due therefrom.

The Cabinet.

Various Govt. officials.

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73. S.B. 5-3-1-6—'Etad vā asyaikaṃ ratnaṃ..... evaitena sūyate taṃ svamanapakramiṇam kurute.'

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Perhaps in times of dangers or necessity the king consulted the Ratnins as his advisers. We do not know whether there was any properly constituted council.

The supreme importance of the Brāhmaṇa Purohita or royal chaplain who was virtually the Prime Minister to the king in matters of administration has been thoroughly discussed in Book I, Chapter II under 'The Position of the Purohita'.

The Popular Assemblies :—

Sabhā & Samiti : The Sabhā and the Samiti seem to be the oldest popular bodies met with in the history of ancient Indian civilisation. These two assemblies formed an essential feature of the government. The terms occur in the Ṛgveda but the reference is vague. Repeated references to Sabhā and Samiti are met with in the Atharvaveda. The A.V. (7-13-1)[74] describes these two bodies as the twin daughters of God Prajāpati, to indicate, in the language of Dr. R. K. Mukherji, 'that they were the original and earliest institutions of Indian polity'.[75] The terms Sabheya, Sabhāpati, Sabhāpāla are found in the Vedic texts. A member of the sabhā was called sabheya or sabhya ; worthy of the assembly ; the speaker of the assembly was termed sabhāpati ; the sergeant who enforced law and order in the assembly hall was designated Sabhāpāla. The S. B. 3-3-4-14 mentions that subsidiary and friendly kings used to attend the sabhā convened by a king. Thus many kings attended the sabhā convened by king Soma and participated in the deliberations. 'The sabhā functioned as a parliament for the disposal of public business by debate and discussion'.[76] The gift of the gab and proficiency in debating were essentially necessary to make one's mark in a sabhā. Decision was taken by the vote of the majority. The resolutions adopted in the sittings of the sabhā were binding on others. A minor who had not attained adolescence could not be a member of the sabhā.

Two Popular Assemblies.

Sabhā.

74. 'Sabhā ca mā samitiścāvatāṃ Prajāpaterduhitarau saṃvidhāne'.
75. 'Hindu Civilisation', Chapter V.
76. R. K. Mukherji : Hindu Civilisation ; Chapter V.

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A youth could attend the said assembly. The T.B. observes—A youth who has attained adolescence could be a member of the sabhā. Hence a young man became dear to all men.[77]

Samiti.

The samiti, it appears, was a more comprehensive organisation, a larger public body which included not only the common people but also representatives of nobles. It was of greater importance than the sabhā and formed a most valuable asset of the king. According to Ludwig, the samiti was a more comprehensive conference including not only all the common people (viśaḥ) but also Brāhmaṇas and rich aristocratic patrons. 'It appears that the samiti', observes V. M. Apte, 'was an august assembly of a larger group of the people for the discharge of tribal (i.e. political) business and was presided over by the king. The sabhā, a more select body, was less popular and political in character than the samiti. Although the functions and powers of sabhā and samiti cannot be exactly defined, numerous passages referring to them clearly indicate that both these assemblies exercised considerable authority and must have acted as healthy checks on the power of the king'.[78]

Difference between the two assemblies.

Of the two organisations the sabhā was definitely a smaller and select body of representatives which functioned not only as a popular body but also as a Court of Justice whereas the samiti was a larger body—the general assembly of the people, more representative in character and wide in its scope. It was the main organ of Vox populi. In the age of the Brs. the samiti became almost obsolescent. Causal reference to the sabhā alone are met with in the Brs.

Samiti is obsolete in the age of the Brs.

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77. 3-8-13-3—'Sabheyo yuvā. Yo vai pūrvavayasī, sa sabheyo yuvā tasmāt yuvā pumān priyo bhāvukaḥ'. Sāyaṇa explains 'Pūrvavayasī' as—'Pūrva-vayaskasya yauvanenopetatvāt sabhāyogyatvam'.

78. History and culture of the Indian People ; The Vedic Age ; Chapter XVII, 'Political and Legal Institutions. Page 553.

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BOOK II

CHAPTER IV

THE RELATION BETWEEN THE RULER AND THE RULED

The Nobility and the Common People

The Brāhmaṇas clearly indicate the relation that existed between the nobility and the common people or the ruling class and the ruled in the later Vedic age. This division of the ruling class and the ruled existed amongst the gods also. Indra is looked upon as the representative of the nobility as he is the king. Says S.B. 4-3-3-9—'Indra is the nobility, the Maruts are the people'.[1] In this text the term Viśa is used in the sense of common people—subjects or the ruled.

The strength of the ruler depends on the subjects.

The real strength of the nobility depended on the people; The foundation of a kingdom rests on the goodwill of the subjects. This truth was known to the Vedic Aryans and finds expression in the Brahmanical texts. The passage of the S.B. quoted above further states—'It is through the people that the noble or king becomes strong.'[2] The same idea is repeated in S. B. 4-3-3-6—'The nobility is strengthened by the subjects.'[3] In the hierarchy of social structure though the noble was placed above the common people there is no denying the truth that the nobility was but a product of the commonalty. The nobles were upgraded from amongst the common people. S.B. 12-7-3-8 states in unambiguous terms, 'It is the people that creates the nobility;

1. 'Kṣatraṃ vā Indro viśo Marutaḥ'.
2. 'Viśā vai kṣatriyo valavān bhabati'.
3. 'Viśā vai kṣatriyo valavān bhavati'.

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the nobility is produced from out of the people or subjects.'[4] The nobility was a minority in comparison with the people who represented the majority. Hence 'the nobility was surrounded by the people on all sides'.[5] One ruler rules over many subjects. The ruler is one but subjects are many. Thus 'chieftaincy (social distinction) is bestowed on one and multiplicity on the people.'[6]

Exploitation of the people by the king.

As a rule the relation between the noble and the people was the relation of the ruler and the subject and as such except exceptional cases that relation could not be pleasant or happy. It is amply evident from later Vedic texts that the subjects looked upon the ruling class as the feeder and themselves as the food. They had to pay taxes in kinds and they were exploited by the ruling class in various ways. S.B. 6-1-2-25 lends support to this fact which runs as follows :— 'Nobility is the feeder and the people are the food ; when there is abundant food for the feeder, that realm is indeed prosperous and thrives.'[7] This feeling of the subjects that the relation between the ruler and the ruled is that of the feeder and the food is testified to by most of the Brahmanical texts. Despotism may be either benevolent or malevolent, and both types of despotism existed in the Vedic age. People looked upon exacting ruthless rulers as torturers that maltreated the subjects. It is with reference to these despots that we come across such passages in the Br. texts. as 'The wielder of royal power feeds on the people ; state is the eater and the people are the food ; state is the deer, people are the barley.'[8] 'Royal power, indeed, presses hard on the people ; the king is apt to

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4. 'Viśa eva tat kṣatraṃ janayati, viśo hi kṣatraṃ jāyate.'

5. S.B. 3-6-1-24—'Kṣatramubhayato viśā parivṛḍham.'

6. S.B. 9-3-1-14—'Ekastham tat kṣatramekasthaṃ śriyam karoti, bahava itare viśi tad bhūmānaṃ dadhāti.'

7. 'Attā vai kṣatriyo'nnaṃ vid yatra vā atturannaṃ bhūyo bhavati tad rāṣtraḥ samṛddhaṃ bhavati tadedhate.'

8. S.B. 13-2-9-8—'Vid vai yavo rāṣṭraṃ harino viśameva rāṣtrāyādyaṃ karoti tasmāt rāṣṭrī viśamatti.'

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The priestly class helps the military class to keep the people under subjection.

strike down people.'[9] The Brahmins or priests as spiritual heads enjoined upon the people to be subservient to the ruler and obey him faithfully. 'The priest makes the people subservient to the nobility.'[10] 'He endows the chieftain or ruler pre-eminently with power, and makes the ruler more powerful than the people ;.....he makes the people obedient to the chief from below.'[11] Again, we find in S.B. 8-7-1-12 —'He thus builds up the nobility above the peasantry. One should not place the people above the nobility.'[12] It is also strictly enjoined that one should never attempt to raise the people to the level of the ruler, or the commonalty to the level of the nobility. In that case the subjects will look down upon the ruler, disobey him and revolt. One who makes such an undesirable attempt creates confusion and brings about a chaotic condition amounting to anarchy. S.B. 10-4-3-22 is very emphatic in its censure on persons who desire to bring about such a chaotic condition in the kingdom. 'They who do so produce confusion between the better and the worse ; they make the subjects equal to and refractory to the nobility or ruling class.[13] Just as the subjects should not be made equal or refractory to the nobility or ruling class for the upkeep of the social order and smooth running of administration, likewise the subjects should never be detached from the ruler and vice versa. In the sacrifice known as Sautrāmaṇī kṣatriyas are enjoined upon to take the pale of milk which is equal to Soma in this case (Payograhāḥ) and Vaiśyas are asked to take up the pale of Surā (Surā-

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9. S.B. 13-2-9-6—'Rāṣtrameva viśi āhanti tasmād rāstrī viśaṃ ghātukaḥ.'

10. S.B. 12-7-3-12—'Viśaṃ tat kṣatrasyānuvartamānaṃ karoti.'

11. S.B. 9-4-3-3—'Viryeṇātyadadhāti kṣatraṃ viśo vīryavattaraṃ karoti ūrdhametaṃ cinoti kṣatram.'

12. S.B. 8-7-1-12—'Kṣatraṃ tadūrdhaṃ citibhiścinoti.....net kṣatraṃ viśābhyupadadhāni.'

13. 'Atho pāpavasyasaṃ kurvanti kṣatrāya viśaṃ prati pratīnim pratyudyāminīmāgnidhrīye vā aśmānaṃ pṛśnimupadadhāti.'

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grahāḥ). But if the order is reversed a great chaos will result therefrom. By reversing the process one would detach the nobility from the people which means detaching the body from the soul or life. In this connection S.B. 12-7-3-15 observes—'One should not detach the people from the nobility ; or the nobility from the people ; that will create confusion and lead to evil.'[14]

In exceptional cases, viz, in cases of malevolent despots people looked upon the ruler as a feeder and oppressor. But, as a rule, the relation between the nobility and the people, between the ruling class and the ruled was cordial. People looked upon the chief or ruler as their protector ; the ruler enjoyed the love, confidence and co-operation of the subjects. Just as the subjects paid to the ruler his due share as a mark of homage, the ruler also gave the people their due share for which they obeyed him and were grateful to him. 'He makes the people subservient and obedient to the ruling class by giving them a due share.'[15] Subjects used to show honour to the ruler when he approached them by prostrating on the ground before him. 'When a noble approaches, all these subjects, the people go down before him, crouch down by him on the ground.'[16]

Good relation between the ruler and the ruled.

The people willingly paid a part of their produces to the ruler as a mark of honour in return of the protection offered by the chief. Thus the fore-share of every possession or acquisition was set apart for the ruler. For the ruling power 'the people set apart a special fore-share.'[17] Thus the nobility or ruling class had a share in everything the subjects possessed. 'Whatever belongs to the people, the chieftain has a share', observes S.B. 9-1-1-18.[18]

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14. 'Kṣatraṃ vai payograhā viṭ surāgrahā yadavyatiṣaktān gṛhnīyāt viśam kṣatrād vyavacchindyāt, kṣatraṃ viśaḥ., pāpavasyasaṃ kuryāt.'

15. 'Pratyudyāminīṃ kṣatrāya viśaṃ kuryāt.....kṣatrāyaivaitad viśaṃ kṛtānukāramanuvartamānaṃ karoti (S.B. 4-3-3-10).'

16. S.B. 3-9-3-7—'Kṣatriyamāyāntamimāḥ prajā viśaḥ pratyavarohanti tamadhastādupāsate.'

17. S.B. 9-1-1-25—'Etasmai kṣatrāyaitā viśo'muṃ purastād uddhāramudaharanti.'

18. 'Tasmād yad viśastasmin kṣatriyo'pi bhāgaḥ.'

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For the sake of royal treasury and smooth administration the ruling class sought the goodwill and co-operation of the subjects. In times of warfare and national calamity the relation became more cordial. When dire calamity faced the kingdom the barriers of caste and class distinctions were considerably relaxed for the sake of solidarity and united front. When a king launched on warfare or marched out on a campaign against the enemy he did not hesitate to eat from the same plate with the people for the sake of victory and the latter's whole-hearted co-operation. This fact is recorded in S.B. 4-3-3-15—'A chief or noble may eat from the same vessel with the people for the sake of victory.'[19] The king or chieftain was always conscious of the fact that he could never win victory in battles without the co-operation of his subjects. 'It is with the help of his people or clan' observes the S.B—'the ruler wins what he desires to win.'[20] This passage proves beyond a shade of doubt that in times of national calamity the rulers condescended to come down to the level of common people to enlist their sympathy and succeeded in making a united front against a common foe. This fact be speaks expdiency and states-manlike outlook. They knew that the upkeep of strict class distinction or vaunted pride of the ruling class would bode ill for the nation and drive deep fissures into the solidarity of the body politic.

Cordial relation in times of calamity.

As referred to above, subjects are compared to food and the state to the consumer. But the opposite idea also occurs in the Brs. Just as the state realised taxes from the subjects likewise it also provided for the economic welfare of the people. In this sense the people also enjoyed the state and fed upon the state. Observes the T.B., 'people are the deer, the state is barley,'[21] that is to say, 'the livelihood of the people' is provided for by the state.

Exploitation of the state by the people.

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19. 'Sa yathā vijayasya kāmāya viśā samāne pātre aśnīyāt.'
20. 5-4-3-8,—'Viśa vai tat kṣatriyo jayati yajjigīṣati.'
21. 3-9-7-2—'Vid vai hariṇī, rāṣṭraṃ yavaḥ.'

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BOOK II

CHAPTER V

THE MEMBERS OF ROYAL FAMILY AND THEIR POSITION

The Position of Queens :—

The king had usually four wives or queens called Mahiṣī, Vāvātā, Parivṛktā and Pālāgalī. The chief queen who was duly consecrated was called Mahiṣī ; the most favourite wife of the king was termed Vāvātā ; the neglected or discarded wife was called Parivṛktā and the fourth queen termed Pālāgalī was lower in social status than the other three queens ; she might have been the daughter of a courtier or minister who was not of royal descent. Sāyaṇa commenting on the A.B. 3-12-11 observes,—'The king had three types of wives of which the Mahiṣī came from higher caste, Vāvātā was a descendant of middle class and Parivṛkti came of the lower caste.' [1] Thus Indra's chief queen or Mahiṣī was Sacī whereas the favourite consort or Vāvātā was Prāsahā. A.B. says—'Indra's favourite wife Prāsahā was his Vāvātā. In case of king Daśaratha we can term the queen Kauśalyā, as Mahiṣī and Kaikeyī as Vāvātā. The S.B. says, 'Aputrā vai Patnī Parivṛkta', i.e., the barren wife of the king is the discarded wife. The chief queen was included amongst the king-makers or Ratnins discussed above and hence was a member of the royal cabinet or mantri-pariṣad.

Four kinds of queens.

The chief queen was indispensable to the king in the performance of sacrifices and religious rites. In certain sacrifices the presence and active co-operation of all the four queens was essen-

Constitutional status of the chief queen.

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1. 'Rājñāṃ hi trividhaḥ striyaḥ. Tatrottamajātermahiṣīti nāma, madhyamajāter Vāvātāiti, adhamajāteḥ Parivṛkti riti.'

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tially necessary. We have seen how all the queens played an important role in the performance of the horse-sacrifice and the gorgeous retinue that attended upon each queen as described under the Aśvamedha in the foregoing pages amply bespeak their queenly status and imperial dignity. The inclusion of the chief queen amongst king-makers bespeaks her constitutional status.

Favourite queen acted as mediator.

The favourite queen also enjoyed an important position as a go-between between the king and his officers or the king and the people. If the people failed to pluck up courage to place their grievances before the monarch for redress they often appealed to the favourite queen Vāvātā who became their spokesman and championed their cause. Thus we read in the A.B. that once the gods failing to appeal directly to their king Indra approached his favourite wife Vāvātā, Prāsahā by name, and she agreed to move her lord in that matter, and intimated the result thereof to them in the following morning.' [2]

Princes and Brothers of the King :—

Status of the princes and king's brothers.

True, the names of king's sons and brothers do not occur in the list of Ratnins or king-makers in the Ratna-Haviṣ ceremony though one expects their names therein. Nevertheless they play important roles in other items of the Rājasūya sacrifice. In the details of the coronation ceremony we have seen during the sprinkling ceremony the king's son or brother or a near relation of his also sprinkles or consecrates the king with the holy water and for the purpose a special wooden vessel is prepared from the Udumvara (Ficus glomerata) tree which is to be used by the king's relation alone and not by the other consecrators. [3] This relation of

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2. A.B. 3-12-11—'Te devā avruvanniyaṃ vā Indrasya priyā jāyā Vāvātā Prāsahā nāma, asyāmeva icchāmahā iti. Tatheti tasyāmaicchanta ; sā enān avravīt prātarvaḥ prativaktāsmīti.'

3. S.B. 5-3-5-12—'Audumvaraṃ bhavati, tena svo'bhiṣiñcati.

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the king is referred to by the term 'sva' in the S.B. which may mean son, brother or any relation. Later on, there occurs a pointed reference to the king's son in the details of the same ceremony. After the besprinkling or anointing ceremony the king pours the remnant of holy waters into the Brāhmaṇa's vessel and hands over that vessel to his (king's) dearest son, thinking 'May this son of mine perpetuate this vigour of mine.'[4] Again, before the game of dice while passing the sacrificial wooden sword from one person to another, as we have seen, the purohita or Adhvaryu priest passes it from his hand to the king's brother whereas, according to Kṛṣṇa yajuṣ text, the priest passes it to the king's dear son and friend etc. These functions viz, that of handing over the vessel of consecration water and of the wooden sword bespeak the constitutional status of the king's son, brother and near relatives. The point that the king's son had the right of succession by the law of primogeniture has been thoroughly discussed. The order of merit in which the vessel of holy water or the sacrificial sword is passed deserves importance as it clearly proves that the position of the king's son or brother was next to that of the chief priest alone. Brothers of kings held honourable position and had the privilege to accompany the kings wherever they went. 'Seasons are the royal brothers of king Soma and they accompany king Soma just as brothers of earthly king accompany the king,' says the A.B.[5]

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4. S.B. 5-4-2-8—'Tad yo'sya putraḥ priyatamo bhavati, tasmā etat pātraṃ prayacchatīdaṃ me'yaṃ vīryaṃ putro'nusantanavaditi.'

5. A.B. 1-3-2—'Ṛtavo vai somasya rājño rājabhrātaro yathā manuṣyasya, tairevainaṃ tatsahāgamayati.'

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BOOK II

CHAPTER VI

WARFARE, DEPOSITION OF KINGS, ARMY AND WEAPONS

Warfare :—

The king was the head of both the civil and the military administration. Frequent skirmishes and even great battles used to take place between different Aryan kings or between kings and non-Aryan tribal peoples. Kings used to take pride in their valour, and warfare was regarded as a part of kingly virtue. 'As the Kṣatriya was created from the arms of the Primal Puruṣa, the creator, strength of arm is possessed by the Kṣatriya', observes the P.B.[1] 'Battle is the valour of a Rājanya', remarks the S.B.[2] while the T.B. enum rates warfare in the list of royal duties.[3] During times of war the kings condescended to rub shoulders with the commoner to enlist his sympathy and support and tried his best to make a united stand against a common enemy. The enemy was not allowed to take advantage of want of unity amongst the opposing party. In times of dire national calamity subjects discussed amongst themselves in groups to devise ways and means to foil the onset of the enemy. During times of war they kept their wives and children in the house of the king as a place of safety. This practice was also a good security against their service and loyalty to the ruling chief because those who were enticed or purchased by the enemy to work as fifth columnists had no chance of getting back their family kept in the royal palace under military surveillance. Thus

During warfare subjects kept their families in the king's palace

1. 6-1-8—'Tasmādu bāhuvīryo (rājanyaḥ) bāhūhyāṃ hi sṛṣṭaḥ.
2. 13-1-5-6—'Yuddhaṃ vai rājanyasya vīryam.'
3. 3-9-14-4—'Yuddhaṃ vai rājanyasya.'

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this practice was a safeguard against betrayal. From the A.B. we gather the above facts. Once the gods sensing defeat in the hands of Asuras convened conferences in small groups ; god Agni conferred with the eight Vasus, Indra with the eleven Rudras, Varuṇa with the twelve Ādityas and Bṛhaspati with the Viśve-devās. They arrived at the following decision ;—'We shall keep all our dearest relations wives, children etc., in the house of king Varuṇa. He who will transgress this rule or entice others will not be allowed to have his relations back (when the calamity will be over). Conferring thus they placed their beloved ones in the palace of king Varuṇa.'[4] There was an oath-taking ceremony for the sake of unity. The people used to take oath touching sacrificial holy butter (Ājya) to make united stand against the foe.

The ruler's condescension in times of war to placate the subjects.

In times of war the monarch or ruling chief freely mixed with the common people and, as discussed under the caption 'The nobility and the common people', even partook of meal from the same plate with the commons. He conferred special favours and graces upon those ministers and chieftains who helped him in times of war. Thus, as recorded in the A.B. 3-12-9, King Indra conferred special favour upon Maruts who aided him during his fight with the demon Vṛtra.

Beginnings of scorched earth policy.

Defeated kings used to throw away their riches and secret articles in the sea so that the victor or conqueror might not seize the same. Thus the Asuras threw away their riches in the sea when they were vanquished by the gods. The gods had to lay hold on that booty after recovering the same from the depths of the sea with the help of a particular metre.[5]

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4. A.B. 1-4-7—'Te devā abibhayurasmākaṃ vipremāṇamanvidam asurā ābhaviṣyantīti te vyutkramya.....yā eva na imāḥ priyatamāstanvastā asya varuṇasya rājño gṛhe saṃnidhāmahai..... te varuṇasya rājño gṛhe tanūḥ saṃnyadadhat.'

5. A.B. 5-22-6—'Devāsurā vā eṣu lokeṣu samayatanta, te vai devāḥ ṣaṣṭhenaivāhanaibhyo lokebhyo'surān.....teṣāṃ.....

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Different types of victory are enumerated in the A.B. such as Jaya, Abhijaya, Vijaya, Saṃjaya. During the ceremony of coronation the king squatting on the ground utters the hymn—'I bow down to the Brahman ; I bow down to the Brahman, I bow down to the Brahman and offer him boon (gift) for the sake of Jiti, Abhijiti, Vijiti and Saṃjiti (different types of victory).'[6] Sāyaṇa thus explains these three kinds of victory. 'Jiti' means simple victory. Conquering all the gods means Abhijiti.' 'Vijiti' means various forms of conquest relating to both powerful and weak enemies. Complete victory following the extirpation of enemies is called Saṃjiti.

Different types of victory.

Many battles, victories and defeats have been recorded in the Vedic texts among which the Dāśarājña yuddha or the battle of the ten kings stands out pre-eminently. It is an epoch-making battle, a historical event of great importance referred to in various hymns of the Ṛgveda. Many important tribes and principal heroes of the then Aryāvarta are connected with this battle. Sudāsa, born of Tṛṣṭu family, was a Bhārata king reigning in Upper India over the particular tract known as Brahmāvarta. Viśvāmitra was the royal priest of Sudāsa. He was the king's adviser or chief minister and with his counsel Sudāsa conquered many battles on the banks of the Vipās and Śutudri. Later on, Sudāsa dismissed Viśvāmitra in favour of Vaśiṣṭha who became his chief priest. This change over was, perhaps, due to Vaśiṣṭha's superior knowledge of the sacred lore, superior spiritual power and wise deliberations in matters both diplomatic and spiritual. Hence Viśvāmitra felt humiliated, became the sworn enemy of Vaśiṣṭha and to wreak vengeance on king Sudāsa led a tribal confederacy of ten kings

Illustrations of warfare, victories and defeats.

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vasūnyāsaṃstanyādāya samudraṃ praupyanta ; ta etenaiva chandasā .....vasūnyādadata.'

6. A.B. 8-37-5—'Namo brahmaṇe, namo brahmaṇe, namo brahmaṇe iti tṛṣkṛtvo brahmaṇe namaskṛtya varaṃ dadāmi jityā, abhijityai, vi jityai, saṃjityā iti vācaṃ visṛjati'.

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against the Bharatas to which line Sudāsa belonged. The five well-known tribes of Vedic India, Puru, Yadu, Turvasu, Anu, and Druhyu along with the lesser known five Alina, Paktha, Bhatanas, Śiva and Vishānin went to the making of the confederacy of ten kings. Under the able guidance of Vaśiṣṭha, Sudāsa with his Bharata followers came out victorious utterly routing the opponents on the bank of the river Paruṣṇi. The ten tribes referred to belonged to the Aryan race. But Sudāsa had to launch another bloody battle on the banks of the Jumna against three non-Aryan tribes, Ajas, Śigrus and Yakṣus who united under the banner of king Bheda. Sudāsa again emerged victorious inflicting a crushing defeat on the enemy. These battles are described in the seventh maṇḍala of the Ṛgveda. The T.B. (1-8-4-1) describes the winter raids of Kuru-Pañcāla kings. [7]

Deposition of Kings :—

Cases of dethronement and expulsion of kings from their kingdom are met with in both the Saṃhitā and Br. texts.

Deposition of kings Duṣṭarītu and Cākra Sthapati.

The S.B. records the case of king Duṣṭarītu Pauṃsāyana. He inherited the kingdom which came down to him through ten generations (Daśapuruṣaṃ rājyam) but he was expelled from the kingdom[8] for his misdemeanour and maltreatment of subjects. The Sṛñjayas also expelled Revottaras Rātava Cākra Sthapati.[9] This Cākra Sthapati king wanted to perform Sautrāmaṇī sacrifice for the expelled king Duṣṭarītu to confer upon the latter the dominion over the Sṛñjayas.

The Pañcaviṃśa Brāhmaṇa (19-7-1 to 19-7-4) refers to a special ceremony called Rād-yajña by which a deposed king may get back his kingdom or a ruling king may win back the loyalty of the subjects.

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7. 'Tasmād śiśire kuru-pañcālāḥ prāñco yānti.'

8. S.B. 12-9-3-1—'Duṣṭarītu ha pauṃsāyanaḥ. Daśapuruṣaṃ rājyādaparuddha āsa.'

9. S.B. 12-9-3-1—'Revottarasamu ha pātavañcākraṃ sthapatiṃ Sṛñjayā aparurudhuḥ.'

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In the A.V. 3-3-5, we read of a king who, expelled from his kingdom, was living in another country ; later on he was recalled and reinstated. Friends and foes alike welcomed him.

Vox Populi in the deposition and recalling of kings.

An element of democracy can be easily traced in this deposition and recalling of kings. This fact goes to prove that though kingship was hereditary in character, the voice of the people acted as a healthy check on the monarch and that subjects could depose a king who maltreated the people or proved a failure as a ruler. Likewise when a deposed king mended his ways the people had the privilege to recall and reinstal him.

Army :—

Senānī, (Commander-in-chief.)

The terms 'senā', senānī, Anīka etc., occur repeatedly in the Br. texts. The commander was called Senānī or Senāpati and we have seen under the coronation ceremony what an important position was enjoyed by the commander. He was one of the Ratnins or king-makers and the king went to his house first to offer the first oblation in the jewel-offering ceremony. So far as this ceremony is concerned his position is superior to that of the chief priest or the chief queen. The several bands of guards that accompany the sacrificial horse bespeak the different kinds of soldiers. A hundred royal princes clad in armour, a hundred warriors armed with sword ; a hundred sons of heralds and headmen of villages bearing quivers filled with arrows, a hundred sons of attendants and charioteers bearing staves and a hundred horses used to accompany the sacrificial horse. The original passage of the S.B. in question has been quoted under the caption 'Monarchy' while dealing with the horse-sacrifice. This passage gives an inkling into the different classes of warriors with their weapons that obtained in that age. Six thousand mail-clad men protected the sacrificial horse of a particular king, says the S.B. 13-5-4-16.

Divisions of the army.

A good army was called Svanīka. The A.B. records a practice observed by commanders or kings desirous of vic-

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tory. He who desires that his army should come out victorious in the battle should take a grass, snap it off on both ends and crossing half the length of his own army should fling the same towards the opposing or enemy's army uttering the words—O Prāsahā ! 'Ka' i.e. Prajāpati (your father-in-law) is looking at you.' The daughter-in-law fights shy and shuns the presence of the father-in-law ; hence the enemy's army take to their heels.'[10]

Array of soldiers.

The soldiers were arranged in several arrays while marching on a campaign. Thus Agni while fighting with the demon arranged his army in three rows putting one commander in charge of every row or battalion ; thus equipped he defeated the Asuras.[11]

Vanguard.

The front or vanguard of the arm.y should always be terrible to strike terror in the opponent's heart. 'The spearhead of the king's army is sure to become terrible', says the S.B.[12] 'A great king placing in front the advance guard of his army pursues his way in safety' —observes the K.B. (5-5).

A leader of a good army is called Suṣeṇa and a conqueror of army is styled Senājit in the S.B. 8-6-1-20. 'A Rājanya or man of military class be born as one heroic, skilled in archery, certain of his mark and a mighty car-fighter.'[13]

Various classes of soldiers.

In the Śatarudrīya hymn of the V.S. we come across various types of soldier whose protector is Rudra. God Rudra is termed 'Senānī', 'Senāpati' (Commander-in-chief). He is 'Aśu-senaḥ and Aśu-rathaḥ' (16-34) i.e. his army marches with great speed and his chariot runs at a breakneck speed. The diverse types of soldier are but the various mani-

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10. A.B. 3-12-11—'Tad yā'sya kāme senā jayettasyā ardhattiṣṭhaṃ stṛṇamubhayataḥ parichidyetara senāmabhyasyet prāsahe kastvā paśyatīti.....sā senā bhajyamānā nilīyamāneti.'

11. A.B. 3-14-1—'Sa triśrenīrbhūtvā tryanīko'surān yuddhamupaprāpad vijayāya.'

12. S.B. 13-2-2-2—'Rājñaḥ senāmukhaṃ bhīṣmambhāvukam.'

13. S.B. 13-1-9-2—'Ārāṣtre rājanyaḥ śūra iṣavyo'tivyādhī mahāratho jāyatāmiti.'

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festations of god Rudra. The thirtyfifth verse of the hymn concerned reads thus :—'Salutation to him (Rudra) who bears a helmet (Vilmin), and to him who puts on a cuirass (kavacin) ; homage to him who puts on a mail and a defensive armour (varmin), and to him who possesses a stronghold (a small fortlike room) on the elephant's back to fight therefrom (varūthin) ; salutation to the far-famed (deity) whose army is renowned (śruta-sena) ; homage to the skilled drummer (Dundubhya) and the players of military musical instruments (that exhilarate the soldiers).'[14] 'Thus the army consisted of infantry, cavalry, charioteers, elephantry ; different types of military dress are also described in the said passage such as helmet, cuirass, coat of mail, armour ; armoured cars, well-protected elephants with fortified strong rooms on their back. A king whose army was far-famed attained the appellation of śruta-sena. Besides fighters there were also musicians and drummers in every army squadron to encourage the soldiers by rousing their military mettle playing on warlike tune and thus spur them on to action.

Divisions of the army.

Weapons and Missiles :—

Various types of missiles and weapons were used during the later Vedic age. 'These are the weapons of a Ksatriya', says the A.B., 'chariots yoked with horses, armours, bows and arrows.'[15] The different parts of an arrow are described in the A.B. 1-4-8 as Anīka, the headpiece, śalya or the sharpened blade, tejana, the tip of the blade and Parṇa the feather portion of the tail end of the arrow. The S. B. (1-2-4-7) refers to thousand-spiked hundred-edged thunderbolt.[16] According to the S.B. an arrow measured five span in length. The carpenter's knife, the chopping knife and razor called Svadhiti are mentioned in the S.B. In the horse sacrifice i.e. Aśvamedha the slaughter-knives of the horse were made of gold, iron and

14. 'Namo vilmine ca kavacine ca namo varmiṇe ca varūthine ca.' Namaḥ śrutāya ca śrutasenāya ca namo dundubhyāya cāhananyāya ca.'

15. A. B. 7-34-1—'Athaitāni kṣatriyasyāyudhāni yadaśvarathaḥ kavaca iṣavaśca.'

16. S.B. 1-2-4-6—'Sahasrabhṛṣṭirvai sa vajra āsit śatatejā.'

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copper respectively to serve different purposes stated in the S.B. 13-2-2-16. The hooked or crooked knife was termed Pārśva. The sword (Asi), scimitar (śāsa), staves (Daṇḍa), sharp shovel (Abhri), bows, armour called varma or sannāha are mentioned in the S.B. The scimitar or śāsa was used to slaughter the sacrificial animal and the person who performed the slaughter was called śamitṛ. The axe or paraśu was used to chop firewood and in battles as well. Missiles used in war were meant to kill people and shafts of weapons were like the fierce teeth of terrible beasts. Hence the S.B. remarks,—'Manslaughter is missile and shafts (of weapons) are like mordacious beasts.'[17]

In the Śatarudrīya hymn of the V.S. we come across the names of many weapons of war. God Rudra possesses thousands of weapons.[18] He holds Heti (weapons), Pināka (colossal bow), Dhanu (small bow), Iṣu (arrow), Vajra (thunderbolt), Khaḍga (scimitar), Asi (sword), Niṣaṅga (a kind of sabre), Iṣudhi (quiver), Śara (thin arrow), Āyudha (missile), Śatadhanu (hundred bows) ; he weilds weapons to be hurled and weapons to pierce (16-23).

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17. S.B. 8-6-1-16,—'Daṃkṣṇavaḥ paśavo hetiḥ pauruṣeyo vadhaḥ prahetiḥ.'

18. 16-53—'Sahasrāni sahasraśo vāhvostava hetayaḥ.'

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SUMMARY OF BOOK—II.

Monarchy was the prevailing system of Government. The first king was elected but for that reason it should not be assumed that kingship was elective in character. All the references to monarchy prove beyond doubt that kingship was hereditary in character, and succession by the law of primogeniture was the practice.

Eleven different types of monarchy are heard of, viz., Rājya, Sāmrājya, Bhaujya, Svārājya, Vairājya, Pārameṣṭhya, Rājya, Māhārājya, Ādhipatya, Svavaśatā and Ātiṣṭha, i.e., kingship, overlordship, paramount rule, self-rule, sovereignty, supreme authority, kingship, great kingship, suzerainty, supremacy and pre-eminence respectively. Some of these terms such as kingship, self-rule, (svārājya) etc., bespeak kingship and some, e.g., Māhārājya, Ādhipatya, Pārameṣṭhya etc., bespeak paramount sovereignty. Different sacrifices were connected with different types of kingship ; e.g., one became king by performing the Rājasūya, an emperor (Samrāt) by performing the Vājapeya and paramount sovereign 'Sārvabhauma' by the performance of the celebrated horse-sacrifice. Though the extents of the territories of emperors and paramount sovereigns have been described in hyperbolic terms as extending to the very ocean and the farthest end of the earth, it is crystal clear that such vastly extensive territories were an impossibility in that age when the Vedic Aryans have neither crossed the Vindhya range nor entered Bengal. The geographical boundary of the territories termed Svārājya, Ekarājya, Sāmrājya etc., cannot be accurately determined to-day. The states in the both early and later Vedic age were small. The territory of an emperor or samrāt was, perhaps, not much bigger than that of an ordinary king. The states of the later Vedic age markedly differ from those of the early Vedic age in one important aspect. In the era of the R.V. Saṁhitā the state was still tribal. The Bharatas, the Yadus, Anus, Druhyus and Turvasus mentioned in the Saṁhitā had no fixed geographi-

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cal boundary or territorial basis for their states. Those early Vedic States may be termed floating states having no fixed basis. But in the later Vedic age the states became territorial with their geographical boundary clearly defined. In the Brs. we find different tribes settling down in different parts of the country.

The coronation or consecration ceremony of king-designates called 'Abhiṣeka' was an important function. The Rājasūya sacrifice was connected with the coronation ceremony. The details of this ceremony are to be found in the A.V., A.B., S.B. etc. Every rite connected with this anointing ceremony was symbolic representing different functions and prerogatives of the king. A popular element connected with this ceremony merits special mention, viz, the presence of Ratnins or king-makers. The list of king-makers comprises the Purohita or royal chaplain, the chief queen, commander-in-chief, subsidiary kings, headman of villages termed Grāmaṇī, the chronicler or court-minstrel (sūta), chamberlain (kṣattṛ) tax-collector (Bhāga-dugha), treasurer (Saṁgrahītṛ), etc. The nucleus of these king-makers is met with in the A.V. where only five king-makers are mentioned ; the list swelled in bulk as ages rolled on and the figure increased from five to eleven. The king was regarded as a 'jewel' (Ratna) and the protectors of this jewel were termed Ratnins. The consent of the king-makers was sought by the king-designate as a convention. The king entered into a covenant with the chief counsellor, the Purohita, as also with his subjects. He regarded himself as the custodian of his kingdom ; the kingdom was a sacred trust and not meant for his self-aggrandisement.

The king was regarded as the earthly counterpart of the heavenly kings, Soma, Varuṇa and Indra. During the coronation ceremony the priests used to strike him silently and mildly on the back with sticks. By this rite the king was taken beyond the jurisdiction of judicial punishment. These facts prove the divine right or, strictly speaking, the demi-divinity of the king. The king was both the legislative and the executive head. Dharma or Law was regarded as the real sovereign and the earthly sovereign as the executive to uphold and enforce that law. It seems that the king was also the head of the

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judiciary and the army having subsidiary officers to look into the judicial and military affairs on his behalf.

The Brahmin chaplain of the king called the Purohita functioned as his chief adviser or Prime Minister in both socio-political issues and spiritual matters. He was the main organ of the administration. The king and his Purohita smoothly governed the kingdom aided by such important royal officers as the Grāmaṇī or the village headman, the Senāpati or the commander of the army, the tax-collector, treasurer, chamberlain, and the two important popular assemblies called the sabhā and the samiti. The simple organs of administration of the Śaṁhitā period had increased in number and became complicated in proportion to the growing complications of the social structure and increasing responsibility of the ruler. The Brahmin Purohita was learned and well-versed in the science of government. Some priests acted as administrators of two states, even three states simultaneously. The Priest Devabhāga Śrautarṣa looked after the administration of two states the Kurus and the Sṛñjayas. Jāla Jātūkarṇya, again, held the post of Chief adviser or administrator of three states, Kāśī, Kosala and Videha simultaneously. This fact bespeaks the extraordinary administrative ability of the Purohitas of the later Vedic age. The king ruled over the villages through the Grāmaṇīs or headmen of villages who formed an important organ of administration. In the age of the Ṛk-Saṁhitā the Grāmaṇī was only a military official who used to lead a squadron of an army in the battle-field. During the age of the Brs. he was probably entrusted with both civil and military duties relating to villages he represented. The highest ambition of a Vaiśya was to attain the status of a Grāmaṇī. From this we may infer the importance of the Grāmaṇī as a civil functionary. It is quite likely that through him the king controlled the commoner and realised taxes. Another officer called Sthapati not mentioned in the list of king-makers must have been one of the important executive and judicial heads. The Sthapati of king Duṣṭarītu restored to the king his lost kingdom. In the S.B. which is later than the A.B., K.B., P.B., T.B., etc., the name of the 'Senāpati' heads the list of king-makers whereas in other Brs. the name of the

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Purohita comes first. From this one may be led to infer that the importance of the priest was probably in the descendant in the age of the S.B. The Āraṇyakas succeed the S.B. and the Upaniṣad the Āraṇyakas ; and we know, the sacrifice was underrated and the path of knowledge was upheld and extolled in the Āraṇyakas and Upanisads. Consequently the Brahmin priests did not find favour with kings and barons in that age.

The two popular assemblies called the sabhā and the samiti formed an essential feature of the government. These assemblies hark back to hoary antiquity. They are mentioned in the R.V. and the A.V. 'The sabhā was a select body of aristocrats like the Homeric council of Elders. It was less popular than the samiti which was a more comprehensive organisation—an august assembly of a larger group of people comprising representatives of both the commoner and the nobles for the discharge of political business. It was presided over by the king. Both these bodies exercised considerable authority and must have acted as healthy checks on the power of the king. The sabhā functioned not only as a popular body but also as a court of justice. In the later Vedic age the samiti became almost obsolescent. Casual references to the sabhā alone are met with in the Brs.

The relation between the ruler and the ruled was cordial. There existed a spirit of co-operation, and repicrocation of goodwill between the king and his subjects. The ruler realised taxes and, in return, protected the life and property of the ruled. In times of war and other national calamities the people stood by their king faithfully and made a united front against a common foe. To enlist the sympathy and co-operation of his subjects in times of war the ruler condescended to come down to the level of the commoner in a sportsman-like spirit and partook of food from a common plate. The subjects of a belligerent state placed their wives and children in the palace of the king who enjoyed their confidence. The ruler consulted his counsellors, subordinate officers and chiefs of clans to chalk out the proper course of action in times of difficulty. Beginnings of the scorched earth policy adopted during warfare may be traced in the Brs. During warfare valuable articles were either dumped

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under earth or dropped into the sea or lake in such a manner that they might be retrieved after the calamity was over. Thus the enemy was deprived of rich booty. Various arms and missiles were in use. Different types of victory have been enumerrated in the A.B. such as Jiti, Abhijiti, Vijiti and Saṁjiti. 'Jiti' means simple victory. 'Abhijiti' is of a slightly higher order of victory than simple victory. 'Vijiti' means various forms of conquest relating to both powerful and weak enemies whereas 'Saṁjiti', the highest form of victory, implies complete victory following the extirpation of all enemies.

The queens, brothers and sons of the king enjoyed an esteemed position. The inclusion of the chief queen in the list of king-makers and the important role she played in the horse-sacrifice amply bespeak her constitutional status. The son of the king was the heir-apparent to the throne. During the coronation ceremony, the king was addressed as 'the father of kings', which fact proves that monarchy was hereditary in character. Certain rites had to be performed by the brother of the king during the consecration ceremony. As the Mahiṣī or the chief queen was one of the Ratnins or king-makers, some scholars infer that she was included in the cabinet that advised the king. Besides the chief queen the other types of queens known as Vāvātā, Pālāgalī etc., also enjoyed an honoured position ; they also had parts to play in the horse-sacrifice. Moreover the favourite queen technically known as Vāvātā often acted as a go-between between the king and the subjects ; she pleaded for the cause of the people to the king and as she was the most beloved of all wives the king condescended and granted her prayer.

Cases of dethronement of kings are also met with in the Saṁhitās and Brs. as well. Thus the S.B. narrates the anecdote of king Duṣṭarītu who was expelled from his kingdom by the nobles and the commoner for his misdemeanour and maltreatment of subjects. We come across cases of kings who after deposition and externment were recalled and reinstated. The P.B. mentions a special ceremony called Rāḍ-yajña by which a deposed king may get back his lost kingdom or a ruling king may win back the loyalty of his subjects. Cases of such malevolent despots or deposed king were a rarity in the Vedic age ;

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one or two exceptions lend support to the general trend of goodwill that existed between the ruler and the ruled and good government that obtained in Vedic India. Piecing together the informations gleaned from different Saṁhitās and Brs. it can be safely asserted that the state in the Vedic age approximated to the ideals of a welfare state. The Vedic state gave protection to citizens from foreign aggressions, maintained internal order by enforcing respect for the traditional law or Dharma. Like Varuṇa the king of gods, the earthly monarch also was termed 'Dharmapati' who maintained law and order in his state. In the Upanisadic era which is a sequel to the age of the Brs. we find king Aśvapati, son of Kekaya declaring his state to be an ideal state. 'In my state', declares Aśvapati, 'there is no thief, no miser or mean fellow, no drunkard, no twice-born person who has not established his sacrificial fire, no uneducated man, and as there is no licentious man, the question of lewd woman, or courtesan does not arise.'[1] This passage proves the existence of ideal welfare states in the later Vedic age.

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1. C.U. 5-11-5—'Na me steno janapade na kadaryo na madyapo Nānāhitāgnir nāvidvān na svairī svairiṇī kutaḥ ?'

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BOOK III

CHAPTER I

THE RELIGIO-PHILOSOPHICAL ASPECT

The Theory Of Sacrifice :—

The main religion of the Brs. consists in the performance of multifarious sacrifices. After discussing the theory of sacrifice the discussion of the different forms and classifications of sacrifice will be taken up.

Every man is born with three debts viz, debt to the seers, debt to the gods and debt to the Manes. He pays off the debt to the seers or ṛṣis by observing the vow of brahmacarya, the debt he owes to the gods by performing sacrifices and the debt to the Manes by begetting children.[1] Hence is the Vedic injunction : 'Sacrifice to the gods (yaja devān), study the Vedas (adhīṣva vedān), and beget children (prajāmutpādaya).' Here the injunction 'study the Vedas' is a part of brahmacarya. Hence it is compulsory for every twice born, i.e., every member of the higher three castes to observe the vow of brahmacarya, a life of self-control and continence, to perform sacrifices in honour of the gods and to please the manes and fathers by begetting children because without progeny the line will be extinct and that will incur the displeasure of and cause sorrow to the Manes.

The Origin of the sacrifice.

His debts are paid off who has completed the term of studentship or brahmacarya, who has sacrificed to the gods and begotten children for the perpetuation of the line. That person is stigmatised as 'anaddhā' untruth and misnomer, observes the A.B., 'who

1. 'Jāyamano vai brāhmaṇastribhiḥ ṛṇaiḥ ṛṇavān jāyate, brahmacaryeṇa ṛṣibhyo yajñena devebhyaḥ prajayā pitṛbhya eṣa vā anṛṇo yaḥ putrī yajvā brahmacārī.'

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does not propitiate the gods, the manes and the seers.'[2] It follows that the performance of sacrifice was compulsory for the brahmin, the Kṣatriya and the Vaiśya. They had no choice in the matter.

Natural inclination of the Vedic Aryans to perform sacrifice ; its cause.

Besides this Vedic injunction the Aryans of the Vedic age were guided by other motives as well to perform sacrifices and offer oblations to the gods. Agriculture was their main occupation and they had to depend on the co-operation of the natural phenomena for a bumper crop. They were afraid of the unforeseen natural calamities and freaks of nature that hampered cultivation and damaged the harvest. The Vedic Aryans sincerely believed that all natural phenomena—the storm, the cloud, the rain, thunder and lightning, the sun and the wind etc.,.....are the visible manifestations of different gods. This deification of natural phenomena formed the nucleus of the Vedic religion in general and the sacrifice in particular. For the sake of favourable weather and successful cultivation the people tried their best to appease the gods through the performance of sacrifice. The deities were invoked and praised in the sacrifice and oblations made of different ingredients were offered in the sacrificial fire which was regarded as the mouth of the gods. 'Fire is the mouth of the gods.' 'Agnirvai mukhaṃ devānām.' Whatever is offered in the fire reaches the gods that are invoked and propitiated.

Nitya and kāmya sacrifices.

Sacrifices may be classified under two broad heads—'nitya' or obligatory and 'naimittika' or occasional. The obligatory sacrifices should be performed without fail ; the performance of those rites may not produce any tangible result (karaṇe phalaśrutirnāsti) but their non-performance will bring disaster (akaraṇe pratyavāyaḥ), Sacrifices like Agnihotra are styled 'nitya' because they must be performed daily

2. 7-32-8—'Ko'naddhā puruṣa iti na devānna pitṛnna manuṣyān'. Sāyaṇa comments—'na pujayediti śeṣaḥ.'

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as a compulsory lifelong sacrificial session. The kāmya or wish-yielding sacrifices come under the occasional type and they form the bulk of the liturgical texts of the Vedic literature. Wish-yielding sacrifices are performed for the fulfilment of various desires of the sacrificers ranging from the birth of sons, possession of wealth etc., to the winning of vast empires. The rewards promised by the sacrifice are both worldly and other-worldly. Many labour under the delusion that attainment of heaven alone is the goal of sacrifice. No doubt, the ultimate purpose of performing a sacrifice is to attain heaven and heavenly bliss but besides this final reward, many worldly gains and immediate results are also promised by the Brs. to the sacrificer. Some concrete illustrations will bear out this statement. In the discussion of the famous sacrificial ceremonies connected with kingship recorded in Book II, viz, the Rājasūya, the Vājapeya, the Aśvamedha we have seen that the immediate results of these sacrifices are attainment of kingship, imperial power and paramount sovereignty respectively. The king who performs the Aśvamedha, the celebrated horse sacrifice will, no doubt, enter the heavenly abode and enjoy heavenly bliss, as declared by the Vedic text 'Svargakāmo'śvamedhena yajeta', 'one desirous of heaven should perform the horse sacrifice ;" but the immediate worldly gain of the sacrificer is paramount sovereignty, 'Aśvamedhena sārvabhaumo bhavati', 'one becomes a paramount sovereign by performing the horse sacrifice' Thus the śruti passages promise both worldly gains and heavenly rewards. The sacrificer attains paramount suzerainty as his immediate gain and the world of heaven as the remote reward when he will pass away from this planet of ours. Thus he has his rewards both here and hereafter. Moreover, some sacrifices are performed with the exclusive object of fulfilling certain worldly desires. For example, the sacrifice called Karirīṣṭi is performed to bring down rain in times of drought ; the 'Putreṣṭi' is performed for the birth of a son, etc. Sound health and a long life are desired by all mortals. The full tenure of human life is reckoned to cover a hundred years in the Brs. and

Rewards of sacrifice are both worldly and other-worldly.

Vedic Aryans longed for both heavenly bliss and worldly prosperity in every form.

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Upanisads. 'We should live a hundred autumns', is a common prayer of the Vedic Aryan. He longs to run the full race of life, to be surrounded by children and grand-children and have worldly prosperity. For these worldly gains and selfish ends also he propitiates the gods and the goddesses.

Thus the sacrifice is regarded as the sure means to attain both worldly and other worldly possession. Hence it is considered to be the greatest of all actions and rites. 'The sacrifice is the greatest of all actions', declare the T.B. and the S.B.[3]

Sacrifice is the connecting link among the sacrificer sacrifice, priests, gods & heaven.

It is the connecting link between the gods and men, between the heaven and the earth, between the visible and the invisible ; through it the sacrificer, the performing priests, the gods and the heaven come into contact with one another of which the former two are visible whereas the latter two are invisible. An insentient or inert being can never achieve such a union ; hence the sacrifice has been conceived as a conscious being with an organic whole. This point will be taken up in our discussion on 'The spirit transcending the form of the sacrifice'. The sacrifice is described as the safe boat, the strong vessel which takes the sacrificer across the troubled waters to the peaceful shore. 'The sacrifice is the vessel wherewith one can easily cross (the troubled waters).'[4] The A.B. (4-17-7)

Sacrifice is the safest boat to cross the troubled waters.

compares the two sāmans, Bṛhat and Rathantara, two chants in the Pṛṣṭhya-sotra to two boats of the sacrifice which take the sacrificer to the goal of sacrifice and 'if the sacrificer omits these two sāmans, in that case the sacrifice fails to reach its goal being tossed hither and thither like a ship without a rudder or pilot when it is off the mooring.'

The gods long for the oblations, the priests long for the sacrificial fees and the sacrificer desires to attain worldly prosperity and heavenly bliss through the sacrifice. Hence the S.B. calls the sacrifice 'the soul (ātman) of all beings and

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3. S.B. 1-7-1—5, 'Yajño vai śreṣṭhatamaṃ karma.'
T.B. 3-2-1-4—'Yajño hi śreṣṭhatamaṃ karma.'
4. A.B. 1-3-2—'Yajño vai sutarmā nauḥ.'

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all gods'. The T.B. regards the sacrifice as 'the unvanquished person of the gods.'[5] Because it fetches food and wealth to both the priests and the sacrificer it is termed wealth (Basu), food (annam), bhaga in the S.B. and the K.B. As the upkeep of the universe depends on the sacrifice it is called 'the pivot of the universe'[6] which helps in the functioning of the cosmic principle. This cosmic principle is called Ṛtam in the Veda which also means truth.

Sacrifice is the source of truth, of piety and the mainstay of the universe.

'The sacrifice is the source of Ṛtam', the principle underlying the creation which is equivalent to truth and moral order.[7] Again as the chief act of piety, the principal form of religion is the sacrifice, it is also termed 'the fountain of good deeds, acts of piety.'[8]

The Brs. observe that in this tenure of life on earth a man is born thrice. His first birth takes place when he is

The three births of man in his life on earth.

delivered from the mother's womb ; this is his physical birth. He undergoes a second birth at the time of his upanayana ceremony which is his spiritual birth where the preceptor is his father and the Sāvitrī verse is his mother. Because of this second birth one is termed 'Dvija' (reborn) on completion of his upanayana ceremony. A man is born for the third time when he is initiated for performing any sacrifice. These three births are narrated by Manu in the following couplet : 'the first birth proceeds from the mother ; the second birth takes place at the time of investiture with the holy thread and the third one at the time of initiation into the sacrifice ; these three births relate to the twice-born according to the Vedic injunction.[9] Some Brs. do not count the Upanayana ceremony as the second birth. Leaving out this ceremony, they regard the initiation into sacrificial rites as the

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5. 3-3-7-7—'Etad vai devānāmaparājitamāyatanaṃ yad yajñaḥ'.
6. T.B. 3-9-5-5—'Yajño vai bhuvanasya nābhiḥ.'
7. S.B. 1-3-4-16—'Yajño vā ṛtasya yoniḥ.'
8. A.B., 1-5-2—'Sukṛtasya yoniḥ (yajñaḥ).'
9. 2-196—'Māturagre'dhijananaṃ dvitīyaṃ mauñjīvandhane, Tṛtīyaṃ yajñadīkṣāyāṃ dvijasya śruticodanāt.'

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second birth, the first being the birth from parents. Those Brs. regard death as the third birth because death here means birth in the heavenly region. After his expiry leaving his mortal remains in this earth the spirit of the sacrificer is transported to the abode of the immortals where he attains union with the gods to whom he sacrificed during his lifetime. Thus he enters into a new phase of life in heaven and hence this period is treated as his third birth. These three births of man are clearly stated in the S.B. 11-2-1-1, and we shall pursue the discussion on this heavenly life under 'Eschatology". That the initiation into the sacrifice constitutes a new birth of man is clearly stated by the A.B. : 'The priests again turn him into a foetus whom they initiate.'[10] In the text concerned a full parallelism is instituted between the initiate and the human foetus. The body of the initiate is anointed with butter because the body of the foetus remains clammy. He is enjoined upon to observe silence and close his fists because new-born babe cannot speak and keeps its fists clenched. The foetus resides within the womb ; hence the initiated sacrificer also is placed in a shed called Prācīnavaṃśa which is regarded as the womb wherefrom he will emerge a new man. A man is not born in the true sense of the term', observes J.B.(U),' 'till he performs a sacrifice ; he attains his real birth through the sacrifice.'[11] Just as an embryo undergoes the throes of labour during delivery, the sacrificer also undergoes self-mortification in the process of the initiation ceremony (dīkṣanīyeṣṭi) to achieve his new life of illumination and glory. Thus the sacrifice not only confers rewards here and hereafter but also confers a new birth, a transfigured life upon the sacrificer. Through this symbolical birth the sacrificer shakes off the worldly limitations and this transfigured life achieved by holy rites enables him to achieve union with the gods of the

Initiation into the sacrifice is regarded as a new birth of the sacrificer.

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10. 1-1-3—'Punarvā etaṃṛtvijo garbhaṃ kurvanti yaṃ dīkṣayanti.'

11. J.B. (U)—3-14-8—'Ajāto ha vai tāvat puruṣo yāvanna yajate sa, yajñenaiva jāyate.'

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sacrifice, to attain the life divine. The sacrificer attains union with and the same form and the same world of the deities invoked in the sacrifice.[12] These three types of union are termed Sāyujya, sārūpya and sālokya. This topic will be fully treated under "Eschatology" as also under 'The spirit transcending the form of the sacrifice.'

Union with gods through the sacrifice : three types of union.

Not to speak of mortals even 'the gods attained to their divine status and glory by performing sacrifice', observes the S.B. 1-5-1-6. As the gods are immortal, the sacrifice imparts immortality to the sacrificer through his union with the gods.[13] The difference between this doctrine of immortality of the Brs. and the Vedantic conception of mokṣa or final emancipation of the individual soul will be explained under "Eschatology."

Gods attained to their divine status through the sacrifice.

Like the sacrificer, the sacrifice also achieves union with the god and the sacrificer, The A.B., S.B., G.B., K.B., and the P.B., state in identical language, 'Yajño vai Viṣṇuḥ.' 'the sacrifice is Viṣṇu'. Similarly the statements,— The sacrifice is Agni', 'Prajāpati is the sacrifice', 'Puruṣa is the sacrifice', 'Ātman is the sacrifice', 'Indra is the sacrifice' etc., are met with in the Brs. which also declare the identification of the sacrificer, Yajamāna, with the sacrifice in clear terms. 'Yajamāno vai yajṇaḥ' observe the A.B. and S.B. Due to the identification of Viṣṇu with the sacrifice and as Viṣṇu conquered the universe taking three strides the sacrificial altar is regarded as the representative of the universe in a miniature scale which is conquered by the god Viṣṇu in the shape of the sacrificer through a symbolical rite.'[14]

sacrifice also attains union with gods.

The sacrifice is the source of the creation of the universe.

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12. A.B. 2-8-6—'Devatānāṃ yajamānaṃ sāyujyam sarūpatāṃ salokatāṃ gamayati'.

13. A.B. 1-5-2—'Amṛtatvamevāsmiṃstaddadhāti'.

14. S.B.1-2-5-7—'Yadetena imāṃ sarvāṃ pṛthivīṃ samavindanta tasmād vedirnāma.'

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The universe sprang from the first sacrifice that was performed by the great God, the Primal Being called Puruṣa. This cosmic sacrifice has been described in details in the Hymn of creation known as Puruṣasūkta of the Ṛgveda.[15]

The sacrifice as the source of the creation of the universe.

As the first sacrifice was performed before the dawn of creation no oblation was available to offer into the sacrificial fire. Hence the creator or Puruṣa offered His own person as oblation in the sacrifice ; in liturgical language He Himself became the haviṣ (offering) of that yajña. The whole creation consisting of the four Vedas, four castes, animals both wild and domestic, sprang from this self-sacrifice of the Primal Being. His vivisected limbs were offered in the sacrifice and different objects of creation came into existence from the different organs of His body. Thus the Brāhmaṇa sprang from His mouth, the Kṣatriya from His arm, the Vaiśya from His thigh and the Śūdra from the feet. The moon was created from His mind, the Sun from His eye, Indra and the fire from the mouth and the wind from His vital breath. The welkin region was born of His navel, the firmament sprang from His head, the earth from His feet and the directions or quarters from His ear.'[16] Thus the sacrifice is the source of creation ; the whole universe sprang from the sacrifice. 'All beings are born of the sacrifice' says the S.B.[17] This first sacrifice is termed Puruṣa-yajña for two reasons ; the Puruṣa performed this sacrifice ; He was the sacrificer, yajamāna. Secondly, because He was also the victim (Paśu) of this sacrifice. 'The gods bound the Puruṣa as animal to perform the sacrifice.'[18] Thus the Hymn of creation amounts to this that the Puruṣa sacrificed His own self, and out of His self-sacrifice the universe, the whole creation came into being. His self-immolation means the creation of the universe. The

The Ṛgvedic hymn of creation.

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15. R.V.—X—90.

16. R.V.—X—90.

17. 'Yajñād vai prajāḥ prajāyante.'

18. R.V. X—90, 'Devā yad yajñaṃ tanvānā avadhnan puruṣaṃ paśum.'

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dismembered limbs of His slaughtered body gave birth to different objects of creation. Primal Puruṣa is the cause of creation through the medium of the sacrifice. All visible and invisible objects of the universe are the diverse manifestations of the great God Puruṣa who was without a second before the creation. Puruṣa who was One and undivided before the sacrifice became many afterwards. This fact underwent reorientation in the Upanisadic age and became one of the fundamental principles of Upanisadic philosophy. The truth is adumbrated in almost all the Upanisads that One Supreme Godhead, One Ultimate Principle has become many. The phenomena is the visible manifestation of that imperceptible noumenon or spirit which is the fountainhead of all life and energy. 'His one form has become every form.'[19] 'He resolved ; 'I shall become many.'[20] This One has become all.'[21] As the One has become many, the essence of One pervades the many through and through. This One Supreme Principle is termed Brahman in the Upanisads. Man is a spark of the divine and hence an unconscious yearning lurks in his heart to go back to the source of his being and be merged in the All soul. He springs from Brahman, lives, moves and has his being by the grace of Brahman and returns to Brahman after shuffling off this mortal coil. This basic doctrine of the Upanisads is also applicable to the theory of the sacrifice in another form. From the primal cosmic sacrifice performed by the Puruṣa, man springs along with the universe from the body of the Puruṣa. Thus he is born of the Creator, the primal Being. He subsists on food, and cattle which are also be products of that sacrifice, i.e., created by the Puruṣa ; hence man's existence depends on the grace of the creator. He performed sacrifice to propitiate the gods and achieves union with the gods through the sacrifice. Every god

The twofold metaphysical implication of the hymn of creation.

Germs of Upanisadic speculation relating to cosmology.

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19. K.U. 2-2-9, 10 ; B.U. 2-5-19,—'Rūpaṃ rūpaṃ pratirūpo babhuva'.

20. C.U. 6-2-3-,—'Tadaikṣata bahu syāṃ prajāyeya'.

21. 'Ekaṃ vai idaṃ vibabhuva sarvam'.

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is the sureme Godhead in essence and is worshipped as such. Hence the sacrificer attains union with the creator of the universe. Thus he returns to the very source of his being.

The implication of the self-sacrifice of the creator.

The sacrifice performed by the Puruṣa may be viewed from another perspective. The Creator was both the sacrificer and the victim in that cosmic sacrifice. The sacrificer himself became the victim, i.e., the sacrificer sacrificed himself. From this fact it can be deduced that self-sacrifice is the means to achieve the end of the sacrifice. As the sacrificer is not able to offer himself in the sacrifice an animal or other oblations are offered as his substitute. Hence the animal (Paśu) is regarded as the proxy of the yajamāna. In some sacrifices because the sacrificer cannot offer himself in the sacrificial fire his effigy made of kuśa grass is thrown into the fire and when it is burnt up the sacrificer thinks that his mortal frame is burnt up and his spirit has achieved union with the god of the sacrifice. This ceremony and similar functions of the yajamāna bear out the fact that self-sacrifice is enjoined in the performance of the sacrifice. In the post-Vedic age there are instances where sages have offered their body in the sacrificial fire. The Rāmāyaṇa describes the self-immolation of the great sage Śarabhanga who offered his body in the sacrificial fire after tending that holy fire with butter according to Vedic injunction.[22]

Correctness of rituals.

The Brs. lay great emphasis on the correctness of the rituals, on the flawless performance of the sacrifice. The sacrificer does not perform the sacrificedirectly but through the mediat.on of the priests who are responsible for the correctness or otherwise of the rites performed. The superintending priest called Brahman looks to the smooth and

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22. Araṇyakāṇḍam 5th Canto, sl. 38,—
'Tato'gniṃ samādhyāya hutvā cājyena mantravat
'Śarabhango mahātejāḥ praviveśa hutāśanam'.

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flawless performance of the rites and there is an expiatory rite in every sacrifice to make amends for any error committed unwittingly. But if any serious error creeps in the priests are to pay dearly for it ; they are to pay the penalty by their death even. Sacrifice is a dreaded god and spares none if a serious flaw or breach of propriety occurs. Thus the priest Bhāllaveya committed a grave error in the rites and as a result he fell down from the chariot and broke an arm.[23] The priest Āṣāḍhi Sauśrāmateya made an unpardonable error and dearly paid for it by his life.[24] In the building of the fire-altar five heads of victims are necessary. Instead of the heads prescribed Sauśrāmateya picked up any five heads as substitute and thereby committed a serious blunder.

Wrong procedure or carelessness brings severe repercussions on priests.

'The whole sacrifice is established in the performing priests,'[25] hence they are mainly responsible for the performance of the rites and rituals. The sacrificer also partakes of the nature of a priest partially and has to perform certain rites as also to utter verses. Hence he also suffers in case of a serious flaw ; moreover, due to wrong performance he loses the promised world of heaven, forfeits the privilege of achieving union with the gods. Be it mentioned here that not only the priests and the sacrificer but the gods also are punished by the sacrifice in case of serious errors or on account of indiscretion. Thus god Bhaga's eyes were burnt out and blinded ; Puṣan partook of an oblation wrongly and his teeth were knocked out ; hence Bhaga is called sightless and Puṣan toothless. Likewise the hand of god Savitṛ was cut off and he was fitted with a golden hand. These punishments of gods Bhaga, Puṣan and Savitṛ are narrated in the S.B.[26] Thus the Sacrifice is a severe and unrelenting task master which does not tolerate any shirking of duty or any serious blunder whether committed wilfully or un-

Illustrations.

23. S.B. 1-7-3-13.
24. S.B. 6-2-1-37.
25. A.B. 2-9-8,—'Rtviji hi sarvo yajñaḥ pratiṣṭhitaḥ'.
26. 1-7-4-6, 7, 8.

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wittingly. This fact proves the difficult and onerous nature of task the priests have to perform. This is why the priests are held in high esteem and the sacrificers place their implicit trust and confidence in them. The priests rightly deserve the sacrificial fee or dakṣiṇā paid to them by the sacrificer. The sacrificial fee does not only benefit the performing priests but also the sacrificer. When the sacrifice is completed, it goes to the heaven and along with it the sacrificer also reaches the heaven by holding fast to the sacrificial fee.

Many western scholars have wrongly described the sacrifice as a magic, as an art of necromancy. Yajña or sacrifice is not magic or witchery ; the two are poles asunder. A magician creates a temporary illusion and for the time being the on-lookers are led to regard the illusion as reality. Men are taken into confidence so long the illusion persists ; nevertheless, even during the period of magic performance they know the whole thing to be a sham show and the man behind the show, i.e., the magician to be a deceiver. But in the case of the sacrifice the sacrificer does not regard the sacrifice as an illusion or sham show but as the infallible medium to attain worldly prosperity and heavenly bliss and to achieve union with the gods. The magician is never regarded as a saint or righteous person whereas the priests of sacrifice enjoy highest esteem and mplicit confidence. The effect of the magic is transitory whereas the result of the sacrifice is lasting and extends to the other world as well. Unlike magic sacrifice has to be performed regularly with faith and reverence. Magic has no jurisdiction over the other world, its effects being confined to this world whereas in the sacrifice the worldly gains are incidental, the real reward lies in the life hereafter in heaven. Again, magic has no religious sanction or halo of sanctity like the sacrifice. In magic there is force or coercion ; the natural elements are coerced to yield the results desired by the magician. In sacrifice there is no coercion ; the sacrificer and the priests fervently appeal to the gods to grant their prayer. The magician tries to bend all corporeal agents to his will to produce the desired effect

Sacrifice and magic distinguished.

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by black art or illusion but it is not so in the case of sacrifice.

The mystic interpretation of the fire altar.

The discussion of the theory of the sacrifice will be incomplete without a reference to the mystic interpretation of the fire-altar embodied in the S.B., Kāṇḍas six to nine. The construction of the fire-altar known as Agnicayana forms a very important part of the S.B. from the point of view of cosmogony and the metaphysical aspect of the sacrifice. The doctrine adumbrated in these three Kāṇḍas of the S.B. is called Śāṇḍilya vidyā as the sage Śāṇḍilya is the chief authority on this doctrine. Sage Yājñavalkya who is the exponent of the whole of the S.B. is not mentioned in these Kāṇḍas. The construction of the altar is a massive one composed of ten thousand and eight hundred bricks of various kinds. The altar assumes the shape of a huge bird with outstretched wings facing the east. There are several layers of brick in the altar. Below the centre of the first layer a lotus leaf is placed on which rests a gold plate. An image of man made of solid gold lies on the gold plate. Three naturally perforated bricks are placed above the golden man in the first third, and fifth layers respectively. The lord of creation, Prajāpati is identified with the sacrifice which in its turn is identified with the sacrificer on the one hand and Agni the fire god on the other. The Puruṣa of the Puruṣa-sūkta of the R.V. described in the foregoing pages has become the Prajāpati in the Brs. The identification of the Prajāpati, Agni, fire-altar, sacrifice and the sacrificer with one another is symbolically represented in the design of the fire-saltar. Again, the altar is also a symbol of the universe in a miniature scale, the universe being a macrocosm of the altar. Hence the fire-altar also symbolises the creation of the universe from the sacrifice. Prajāpati, the lord of creation, is offered as a victim in the sacrifice and from his dismembered limbs spring forth the different objects of the universe, both the movable and the immovable, the sentient and the insentient. As soon as the sacrifice is concluded it flies to heaven ; hence the completion of the sacrifice is treated as its death. For the sake of creation the sacrifice is eternally renewed and Prajāpati is eternally offered

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as the oblation in the sacrifice to perpetuate the existence of the universe. Prajāpati created Agni and in this respect Prajāpati is Agni's father but from another perspective Prajāpati is also the son of Agni for the following reason. When Prajāpati's person is dissected to be offered as oblation in the sacrifice his spirit is released from the physical thraldom and Agni absorbs that fiery spirit in his own person. Hence when Prajāpati is regenerated by the reconstruction of his dismembered limbs in the shape of the fire-altar Agni becomes his right hand. As Agni plays an important part in the regeneration of Prajāpati Agni becomes his father also. The fire-altar is the body of Agni through which the lord of creation is revived. The lotus-leaf that is placed at the bottom of the fire-altar is symbolic of the cosmic waters and the womb wherefrom Agni-Prajāpati and the human sacrificer are to emerge. The gold plate over the lotus-leaf represents the sun-god and the gold image of a man lying on the gold plate symbolises the creator Prajāpati, Agni and the sacrificer jointly. The beginnings of image-worship may be traced in the erection of this symbolic gold image representing the two deities, Prajāpati and Agni. The three perforated bricks placed in three layers symbolise the three worlds through which the gods Agni and Prajāpati, and the sacrificer will have to pass on their way to the fourth invisible world, viz, the world of the immortals. Prajāpati as the lord of creation is also the generator of Time. The construction of the altar takes one year for its completion and the year is a fragmentary unit of Time. Just as the fire-altar is a microcosm of the universe, the year also is a microcosm of Time. With the sacrifice Time is also eternally regenerated in the shape of the year connected with the erection of the altar. The righteous performer of this holy rite, the sacrificer is promised a long and prosperous life covering a century which is another unit of Time. But every creature after running its race of life will cease to exist according to the inexorable divine decree. The sacrificer, as the human representative of his divine counterpart Prajāpati ultimately passes away from this planet, i.e., to say, he himself becomes Death,—Death ceases to exercise power over him and he is translated from this world of toils and

Germ of Image-worship.

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turmoils to the blessed land of the immortals, the region of heavenly bliss. Released from the trammels of the body he becomes pure spirit and pure intellect and in that spiritual form he returns to the source of his being.

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BOOK III

CHAPTER II.

The Forms of Sacrifice :—

Sacrifice may be divided into five classes viz, Homa, Iṣṭi, Paśuyāga, Somayāga and Satra. Every type of sacrifice has its Prakṛti or model and Vikṛti or modifications which follow the pattern of the model. The Prakṛti is also called Pradhāna—the main sacrifice and Vikṛti the Aṅga or accessories. Thus the Prakṛtis or models of the five types of Vedic sacrifices Homa, Iṣṭi,Paśu, Soma and Satra are Agnihotra, Darśa-Paurṇamāsa, Daikṣa or Prājāpatya Paśu, Agniṣṭoma and Gavāmayanam respectively.

Five models of sacrifices.

Homa : The Homa sacrifice is also known as Darvī-homa. It consists in offering oblations of milk, curd, rice etc., to the Sun-god and Agni in the sacrificial firepit every day both in the morning and in the evening. It is also called Darvī-homa as the offerings are poured into the fire by means of a ladle called Darvī. Agnihotra is the model for the Homa type of sacrifices. The higher three castes had to perform the Agnihotra daily in the early Vedic age. Later on the Kṣatriyas and Vaiśyas appointed their Brahmin priests to perform it on their behalf. It was obligatory for a Brahmin to perform the Agnihotra every day along with his wife throughout his lifetime. 'A Brāhmaṇa should perform the Agnihotra daily.'[1] 'This prolonged sacrifice viz, Agnihotra is called 'Jarā-marya-satra' because one can be exempted from its performance either due to excessive senility of old age or death.'[2]

Agnihotra the model for Homa.

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1. 'Brāhmaṇo'haraḥ agnihotraṃ juhuyāt'.

2. S.B. 12-4-1-1,—'Etad vai jarāmaryaṃ sattraṃ yadagnihotraṃ jarayā vā hyevāsmāt mucyante mṛtyunā vā'.

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Even to-day Agnihotrin Brahmins are met with in India particularly in South India. In this sacrifice oblations are offered to the Sun-god in the morning before sunrise and in the evening after the sun had set. The same hymn is uttered both the times with slight variation. In the morning the verse accompanying the oblation reads as—'Sūryaḥ jyotir jyotiḥ sūryaḥ' (the sun is the light and the light is the sun) but in the evening the term 'Agni' i.e., fire is substituted in place of Sūrya ; because the sun relegates its light to the fire when it sets. There s a controversy as to whether the morning oblation should be offered before the rising of the sun or after it had risen. It is said,—'if one offers before the rising of the sun his oblations defeat the purpose of the Agnihotra rite because when the sun is not yet up to whom will be sacrifice'. The opposite camp also has a fling at those who sacrifice before sunrise. They reason thus,—'When the sun is already up it is no good to offer oblations ; to whom wilt thou sacrifice. He who sacrifices after the rising of the sun his oblations are enjoyed by the swine and not by the god'. The solution is thus given in the Śrautasūtras. The time differs according to different Vedas. The followers of the Bahvṛca and Chandoma schools offer oblations before the sun rises : hence they are styled 'Anuditahomin'. The followers of Kaṭha, Taittirīya and Maitrāyanīya schools offer oblations after sunrise and are called 'Uditahomin'. In any case it is binding that before the rise of the sun fire should be culled from the Gārhapatya Agni and placed in the homa-kuṇḍa or sacrificial fire pit. Another controversy raged over the time element of the Agnihotra during the later Vedic era viz., whether the Agnihotra was a one-day sacrifice or two-day sacrifice. If the evening oblation is offered after the sunset and the morning one before the sunrise in that case the time is counted as one night, i.e., one day and not two days. The time is to be counted from the evening offering and not the morning homa because the Agnihotra starts with the evening oblation. If the evening oblation is offered after the sun has set and the morning one before sunrise the time covered from the previous evening to the following dawn should be reckoned as one day due to the absence of the sun in each case. According to A.B. this is wrong and the performance of both the evening and morning obla-

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tions should cover two days. For this purpose the evening oblation should be offered after the sunset but the morning one is to be offered after the sunrise. The sage Vātāvata and a Gandharva-obsessed maiden endorse this view in the A.B. and aver that this was the timehonoured practice and those who perform the rite in one day have made a departure from the traditional practice.

Details of Agnihotra.

In the Agnihotra the oblation consists of milk and a separate milch cow is reared for that purpose called Agnihotrī gābhī. Milk is boiled in an earthen pot within the sacrificial campus and is offered as oblation in the Āhavanīya fire with a ladle called Agnihotra-havanī. Two principal oblations are offered in the evening rite the first being offered to Agni and the second to Prajāpati. Similarly, two main offerings are made in the morning of which the first belongs to Sūrya and the second to Prajāpati. These four oblations are the important ones in the Agnihotra. As the first oblation in the evening is offered to Agni the whole sacrifice goes by the name of Agnihotra. This view is advocated by Āpastamba in his Śrauta sūtra (6-13-1 to 9).

The sacrificer (yajamāna) himself should offer these oblations in the morning and evening. If he be physically incapaciated he should get it done by his son or priest. On the full moon and new moon days he will have to do it himself under all circumstances ; proxy is not allowed. Mlik, curd and gruel (yavāgu) are used as offerings. Each of this offering (haviṣ) is conducive to particular result. Those who desire cattle or heaven should offer milk ; those desiring objects of senses should offer curd, and gruel—offering is meant for them who desire possession of villages. Besides these main objects of oblation, rice, paddy and butter are also offered serving different ends. One desiring food should offer rice ; one longing for attainment of strength should offer paddy, and butter is the oblation for him who desires mental vigour.

A bachelor has no right to perform Agnihotra. If a widower does not want to remarry it becames a problem as to how he should perform this Vedic rite. This problem will

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be discussed under the caption 'The spirit behind the Form of the sacrifice' in this book, i.e., Book III.

Iṣṭi :—The model for Iṣṭi type of sacrifices is called Darśapaurṇamāsa. Darśa means the confluence of the sun and the moon (sūryendu-saṅgamaḥ), i.e., the dark moon called Amāvasyā. Paurṇamāsī means the full moon. This sacrifice is to be performed on the new moon and full moon days. A person belonging to one of the three higher castes who is neither a bachelor nor a widower and who has already established his Gārhapatya fire is entitled to the performance of this sacrifice. The ceremony consists of two days in the full moon and two days in the dark moon. During the full moon the rite commences from the morning of the full moon day and terminates in the forenoon of the following day i.e., Pratipada. Likewise in the newmoon the ceremony covers the period from the morning of that day to the forenoon of the day following. While performing this sacrifice for the first time the sacrificer should commence with the full moon rite and follow' it up with the new moon rite ; he should not commence in the new moon. Four priests are required for this performance, viz,—Hotṛ, Adhvaryu, Agnīdhra and Brahman. There is no hierarchy of position among these priests. Unlike Somayāga the four priests have equal powers here. Though there are many accessory oblations and deities in this sacrifice, three oblations stand out prominently in both the full moon and new moon rites. In the full moon performance the three principal oblations are as follows. The first one consisting of rice-pap (Purodāśa) is offered to the fire-god. The second oblation characterised as Upāṃśu-yāja is offered to one of the four deities viz., Viṣṇu, Prajāpati, Agni and Soma. The third one consisting of rice-pap is meant for the couple Agni and Soma. In the newmoon first oblation of rice-pap is offered to Agni ; the second consisting of curd and the third of milk are offered to Indra. The indispensable parts of this sacrifice viz. the rites known as Prayāja, Anuyāja, Patnī-Saṃyāja are performed in both the full-moon and the new moon ceremonies. An offering to the fire god called Agni Sviṣṭakṛt marks the

Darśa-paurṇamāsa, the model of Iṣṭi.

Details of Darśapaurṇamāsa Sacrifice.

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close of the offerings. All gods are invoked in the Svistakṛt offering. This is followed by the tasting of the holy leavings of oblations by the priests called Iḍā-bhakṣana. The Superintending priest Brahman has a special share; all the priests invoke the Iḍā collected from all the offerings. While collecting the holy leavings the priests touch the sacrificer. The rice cakes are first distributed and then every one partakes of the Iḍā. Following the Anuyāja and preceding the Patnī-Saṁyāja ceremony an effigy made of kuśa grass called Prastara representing the sacrificer is thrown into the fire. When the effigy is burnt up the sacrificer thinks his physical body has been burnt up and through the sacrifice his spirit has achieved union with Viṣṇu. Meditating on this fact he regards himself deified and takes three strides like the god Viṣṇu on the sacrificial ground when the hymn 'Idaṃ Viṣṇur vicakrame, tredhā nidadhe padam' (here Viṣṇu strides and takes three steps') is uttered.

This sacrifice may be either obligatory (Nitya) or wish-yielding (kāmya). It is Nitya for those who perform it in every full moon and new moon throughout their lifetime without any break. In their case non-performance or break of performance will lead to some disaster called Pratyavāya. It is Kāmya or wish-yielding for them who do not perform it regularly but only once or twice for the fulfilment of some desire. In the Kāmya form of this sacrifice the rice-pap-oblation is made of either rice or barley.

The Śatapatha Br. says, 'Darśapaurṇamāsa is the model of all sacrifice' and this sacrifice has been discussed at the very beginning of the S.B. There are innumerable iṣṭis such as 'Agrāyaṇa Iṣṭi' or offering of the first fruit or first produce of the fields, 'Putreṣṭi' or iṣṭi for the sake of begetting son, 'Karīri iṣṭi' performed in times of drought to bring down rain, various iṣṭis for various types of purification etc. All these iṣṭis look up to the new and full-moon sacrifice Darśapaurṇamāsa as their model.

Paśu-yāga :

Daikṣa or Prājāpatya Paśu is the model for all Paśu-

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yāgas. It is also termed Niruḍḥa-paśu-bandha. One who has established his household fire (Gārhapatya Agni) is called Āhitāgni. Such a person should perform the Paśu-yāga every year. It may be performed once or twice or six times in a year. If it is performed once only it should be done in the rainy season; if twice, one sacrifice should take place in the Uttarāyaṇa of the sun and another in the Dakṣiṇāyana. If one desires to perform six times one performance should take place in each of the six seasons. At least once it should be performed every year by an Āhitāgni otherwise he will be held guilty.

Prājāpatya Paśu-the model for all animal sacrifices.

An animal is the offering in this sacrifice; hence it is called Paśu-yāga. A goat is the offering; all the limbs of the goat are not offered. Only such special organs such as its heart, fat etc., are offered as oblation. The deities are Prajāpati, Sūrya or Indra and Agni jointly. Six priests are necessary for the performance,—Adhvaryu, Pratiprasthātṛ,, Hotṛ, Maitrāvaruṇa, Agnīt and Brahman. In Iṣṭi type of sacrifices both the Anuvākyā and Yājyā verses are uttered by one and the same priest viz., Hotṛ but in the Paśuyāga only yājyā hymns are uttered by the Hotṛ whereas the Anuvākyās are recited by another Ṛgvedic priest called Maitrāvaruṇa who is a helping hand to Hotṛ. The Praiṣa mantras are also uttered by the Maitrāvaruṇa priest. In Iṣṭi there is no Puronuvākyā or Praiṣa in the Prayāja and Anuyāja performances.

In this sacrifice stakes called Yūpas are necessary for tying the sacrificial animal thereto. These stakes are made of one of the four kinds of trees—Palāśa (Butea Frondosa), Khadira (Acacia Catechu), Vilva (Aegle Marmelos) or Rohitaka. The different varieties of stake subserve different purposes. Oen desirous of attaining heaven should fashion the stake out of Khadira wood; he who longs for food (anna) and nourishment (puṣṭi) should make the stake out of Vilva tree and he who desires mental strength and spiritual excellence should take the Palāśa wood for fashioning the stake. Towards the easternmost part of the sacrificial altar the stake is posted. The animal is generally a he-goat without any blemish like blind-

Details of Paśuyāga.

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ness, lameness, etc., and whose teeth have grown. It is sanctified by hymns and the priest touches it with kuśa grass or twig of the Plakṣa tree uttering the verse—'Agnaye tvā juṣṭamupā-karomi'. Hence this rite is called upākaraṇa. The victim is throttled to death and then its limbs are dissected by the priest called Śamitṛ, and the place of slaughter is called Śāmitra located in the north-eastern quarter of the altar. The fat of the animal belonging to the cardiac region called omentum is offered as oblation by the Adhvaryu in the sacrificial fire known as Āhavanīya. The specified organs of the animals are cooked in an earthen vessel in the Śāmitra Fire. The organs consist of the heart, tongue, chest, liver, two kidneys, left armpit, both sides of ribs, right buttock and one-third of the anus. While these organs are being cooked the priest offers a rice-pap as oblation according to the formula laid down for iṣṭi. All the priests along with the sacrificer with the sole exception of Pratiprasthātṛ partake of the remnant of the offered rice-pap ; this ceremony is known as Iḍā-bhakṣaṇa. After this partaking of the Iḍā the cooked organs of the animal are taken out of the pot, minced into small pieces and offered as oblation in the Āhavanīya fire-pit. The meat juice called Vasā collected in the cooking pot is also offered as oblation. This is followed by eleven Anuyājas which again, are followed by the ceremony called Patnī-saṃyāja.

In the animal sacrifice the strangling or killing of the animal is not regarded as slaughter. It is not a crime. When an animal is offered as a victim in the sacrifice it leaves behind its mortal frame and its spirit achieves union with the gods invoked in the sacrifice. The sacrifice helps the animal to attain to this divine status, union with the gods in an easy way. Addressing the animal a Ṛgvedic verse states, 'Na va u etan mriyase na riṣyasi devān idesi pathiviḥ sugebhiḥ', i.e. 'you will neither die nor will you be slaughtered but you will reach the gods through easy path'. Manu also lends support to this philosophy at the back of animal sacrifice when he asserts in clear terms,— 'Yajñe vadhaḥ a-vadhaḥ' i.e. killing in sacrifice amounts to non-killing.

One school of ritualists objected to the eating of the holy leavings of the animal flesh in the sacrifice on the ground

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that as the animal is the representative of the sacrificer that will amount to eating the flesh of the yajamāna, i.e., human flesh which is prohibited. But the A.B. (2-6-3) meets and refutes this charge in the following manner. With the help of Agni and Soma Indra killed Vṛtra and for rendering this assistance Agni and Soma asked an animal as a boon of Indra. Indra granted their boon. Hence the animal is offered to Agni and Soma as a fulfilment of that boon and not because it is a representative of the sacrificer. Hence the priests should partake of the flesh of the animal.

Agniṣṭoma (Soma-yāga) :—

Agniṣṭoma sacrifice is the model for all Soma-sacrifices. It is also called Jyotiṣṭoma. The juice of the creeper soma is the main oblation in this sacrifice. In the twelve Stotras sung in this type of sacrifice the last Stotra goes by the name of Agnistoma. Because the sacrifice terminates with the Sāmavedic chant (stotra) called Agniṣṭoma, the sacrifice also is termed Agniṣṭoma. This sacrifice has been dealt with in many of the Brs. A.B., in particular gives a detailed account of Agniṣṭoma. Out of the forty chapters of the book the first sixteen chapters deal with the duties of the Ṛgvedic priest in the Agniṣṭoma sacrifice. In the introduction to our book while discussing the contents of the A.B. we have given an outline of the different stages of this sacrifice covering five days.

Agniṣṭoma the model for all Soma sacrifices.

Every year in the spring this sacrifice is to be performed by the twice born caste with his wife. Soma juice is the main oblation. This rare creeper is procured from distant places and preserved with care. As Soma is not available now-a-days another creeper called Putikā is used as its substitute. All the sixteen priests are required for the performance of Agniṣṭoma. Some authors of Śrauta sūtras count another priest called 'Sadasya' as the seventeenth one. Some again consider yajamāna or sacrificer to be the seventeenth. On the first day the sacrificer welcomes these priests and appoints them for the performance promising sacrificial fees (Dakṣiṇā). This is known as Ṛtvik-varaṇam. This is followed by the initia-

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tion ceremony called Dīkṣaṇīyeṣṭi. The sacrificer and his wife are initiated. They undergo certain ceremonies like new-born babies. Hence the initiation (Dīkṣā) is regarded as the second birth. On the second day the initial sacrifice (Prāyaṇīyeṣṭi) is performed in the morning. Five deities are invoked Pathyā Svasti, Agni, Soma, Savitā and Aditi. Rice is the oblation for Aditi and for the remaining four gods melted butter is the oblation prescribed. The Prāyaṇīya rite is followed) by the ceremony of purchasing Soma creeper (Somakraya). Soma is purchased from a śūdra in exchange of ten mediums of barter viz, one year old cow, gold, she-goat, milch cow and her calf, an ox, a bullock fit to draw cart, a bull-calf, a she-calf and clothes. Soma is the king of gods and Brāhmaṇas. Hence Soma is placed on a cart drawn by two bullocks and driven by the priests towards the sacrificial altar. King Soma becomes an honoured guest and hence a rite is performed known as Ātitheyeṣṭi or the rite of hospitality. Rice-paps placed on nine potsherds are offered to Viṣṇu in this rite. This is followed by Pravargya ceremony which again is followed by the sacrifice termed Upasad iṣṭi. On the third day a great altar (Mahāvedī) is erected confronting the eastern part of the sacrificial campus technically known as Prāgvaṃśa or Prācīnavaṃśa. On the fourth day an animal sacrifice, Paśuyāga is performed in honour of the deities Agni and Soma jointly after the manner of Nirūḍha-paśu-bandha. On this day Soma is carried to the right Havirdhāna altar ; this function is termed Havirdhāna-praṇayanam. At midday libation animal flesh and rice-pap are offered as oblation and at dusk the different organs of the animal are offered as oblation. This is followed by the ceremony relating to the sacrificer's wife called Patnī-saṃyāja. These ceremonies covering the first four days serve as a prelude to the actual Agniṣṭoma sacrifice which takes place on the fifth, i.e., the last day. On the fifth day the ceremony of the extraction of Soma-juice (Somābhiṣava) takes place. All the priests get up before dawn, bathe in holy water and make arrangements for the extraction of the Soma juice. Before the chirping of the birds the Hotṛ recites the verses known as Prataranuvāka at early dawn. Soma is placed on a slab of stone and the water called Vasatī-

Details of Agniṣṭoma.

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varī is sprinkled on it. The juice is extracted by pressing it with another piece of stone. The juice is placed in a vessel called graha and strained (percolated) by means of a strainer termed Daśa-pabitra made of the hair of ram or goat. The strained juice is kept in a pitcher named Droṇakalasa. Soma is pressed thrice per day for three oblations. The morning oblation goes by the name of Prātaḥsavanam, the midday libation is termed Mādhyandina savanam and the twilight one Tṛtīya-savanam as the evening pressing is the third extraction in order of enumeration. The priests along with the sacrificer partake of what remains of the soma juice after libations are over from spoons called camasa. After the mid-day libation sacrificial fees in the form of gifts are offered to the priests ; the gifts consist of cows, horses, mules, asses, goats, sheep, seasamum, lentils called Māṣa, paddy, barley etc. The third and last oblation of Soma is followed by the ablution ceremony called Avabhṛtha iṣṭi. This sacrifice is performed in the water where all the priests along with the sacrificer go to take bath which marks the conclusion of the Agniṣṭoma. Varuṇa and Agni are the deities invoked there. Four Prayājas and two Anuyāja ceremonies are performed. A rice-pap is offered to god Varuṇa. All the oblations are offered in water instead of fire. The sacrificer sprinkles water on the heads of all the bathers. The Yajamāna and his wife cast away the garments they have been putting on since initiation ceremony and put on new garments handed over to them by the priest called Unnetṛ. Coming back to the sacrificial altar the sacrificer performs the concluding iṣṭi called Udayanīya which is the antonym of Prāyaṇīya (commencing). The Puro'nuvākyās and Yājyās of the Prāyanīya become yājyās and Puro'nuvākyās in the Udayanīya iṣṭi respectively. The special preparation made of milk, curd, honey, sugar etc., called caru is offered as oblation.

The different Saṃsthās of the Soma sacrifice viz, the seven varieties Agniṣṭoma, Atyagniṣṭoma, Ukthya, Soḍaśi, Atirātra, Vājapeya, and Āptoryāma have been enumerated in the introduction of this book. The Saṃsthās vary according to the number of hymns. In Agniṣṭoma there are twelve stotras, twelve śastras and four stomas. In Ukthya there are fifteen stotras, fifteen śastras and four stomas. In the Soḍaśī saṃsthā

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there are s xteen stotras, sixteen śastras and four stomas. Atirātra has twentynine stotras, twentynine śastras and four stomas—while Āptoryāma has thirtythree stotras, thirtythree śastras and nine stomas. The term Saṃsthā means the termination of the sacrifice. The sacrifice is named after the saṃsthā in which t ends, e.g. Agniṣṭoma is the name of a particular sāman and the sacrifice that terminates with that sāman is named after that sāman.

Verses which are recited without the element of chant or vocal music (gāna) are termed śastras whereas those put to vocal music are called stotras. One sāman is composed of three Ṛkverses. The repetition of a sāman goes by the name of stoma.

Gavāmayana : (Satra) :—

Though Gavāmayana is a soma sacrifice and as such has Agniṣṭoma as its model still it is separately enumerated from the perspective of time-element. Sacrifices which are completed in one day are called Ekāha or one-day sacrifice ; sacrifices which cover more than one day but less than twelve days are termed Ahīnas and those which exceed twelve days and take a long time for completion are designated 'Satras', i.e., sessional sacrifices. The satras may take one year, ten year, a hundred year or even a thousand year for its completion according to the nature of the sacrifice. The sacrifice called Gavāmayana is a sessional sacrifice and is the model (Prakṛti) of all satras. Its performance covers 361 days, i.e., nearly a whole year. It can be divided into three parts,—first part consisting of 180 days ; the middle part consisting of one day called Viṣuva (equinox) and the last part consists of 180 days. The performance of the last 180 days takes place in the reverse order of the first 180 days. The first part starts with Atirātra and ends with Svarasāman whereas the last part opens with Svarasāman and rounds off with Atirātra. The analogy of a reflection in a mirror has been given to explain this factor. The latter part is the reverse of the first part just as a reflection is reversed in the mirror.

Gavāmayana the model for sessional sacrifices.

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The following is the chart of sacrifices involved in the performance of Gavāmayana.

Names of sacrifices.	Number of days involved.		
Atirātra	1		
Ukthya having caturviṃśa stoma ..	1		
4 Abhiplabaṣaḍaha (4×6)	24	(Repeated five times) 30×5=150	First six months.
1 Pṛṣṭhya-ṣaḍaha (1×6)	6		
3 Abhiplaba Saḍaha (3×6)	18		
1 Pṛṣṭhya-ṣaḍaha ..	6		
Abhijit	1		
3 Svarasāmans ..	3		
Total ..	180 days.		
Viṣuvant day ; also called Ekaviṃśāha —	1		
3 Svarasāmans ..	3		
Viśvajit	1		
1 Pṛṣṭhya	6		Last six months.
3 Abhiplava (3×6) ..	18		

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Names of sacrifices.	Number of days involved.	
1 Pṛṣṭhya & 4 Abhiplava repeated four times ..	120	
3 Abhiplava (3×6) ..	18	
1 Goṣṭoma & 1 Āyuṣṭoma	2	Last six months
Daśarātra	10	
Mahāvrata	1	
Atirātra	1	
Total ..	181	
	Grand Total — 361	

Thus this satra requires a year for its completion. The term Ṣaḍaha mentioned in the chart means a round of six days as follows :—

First day — Jyotiṣṭoma.
Second day — Goṣṭoma.
Third day — Āyuṣṭoma.
Fourth day — Goṣṭoma.
Fifth day — Āyuṣṭoma.
Sixth day — Jyotiṣṭoma.

Each of these six sacrifices is to be performed thrice daily. Abhiplaba-ṣaḍaha and Pṛṣṭhyaṣaḍaha are two variations of the Śaḍaha sacrifice. The former starts with Jyotiṣṭoma and ends with Jyotiṣṭoma the intervening four days being four Ukthya performances. The latter opens with Jyotiṣṭoma but terminates with a ukthya. It is called Pṛṣṭhya because there is Pṛṣṭhya-stotra in the midday libation of soma-juice.

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A careful perusal of this sessional sacrifice Gavāmayana will show that the details of the rites involved have been drawn up in imitation of the annual course of the sun. The whole sacrifice is divided into two distinct parts, each consisting of six months of thirty days each; in the midst of both lies the Viṣuvant day i.e., the equator or central day, dividing the whole satra into two equal halves. The ceremonies in both the six monthly halves are the same with the only difference that they are performed in an inverted order in the latter half. This fact represents the increase of the days in the northern and their decrease in the southern progress of the sun; both the increase and decrease take place in the same proportion.

The details of Gavāmayana embody the course of the Sun and the then calendar

Sacrifices having a political bearing :—

Sacrifices such as the Rājasūya, Vājapeya, Aśvamedha, Varuṇasava etc., are connected with Kingship and have a political significance. All these sacrifices have been discussed at length with their import in the Book II of this work captioned 'The Political Aspect'. Descriptions of certain rites left out in the said chapter are given below in broad outline.

Sacrifices having a political bearing.

Rājasūya :—The importance and necessity of this sacrifice and its relation to the Vājapeya and Varuṇa-sava have been thoroughly discussed taking into consideration all the Brs. and Śrauta sūtras in Book II and need no repetition. This sacrifice was performed by Kings during their coronation ceremony in ancient India. It was also in vogue in the post Vedic era. In the epic age king Yudhiṣṭhira performed Rājasūya. From the Purāṇas inscriptions and copper plates it is evident that the sacrifice was performed even in the 1st century A.D. It partakes of the nature of Iṣṭi, Paśu, Soma and Darvī-homa rs it comprises 129 iṣṭis, two Paśu-Yāgas, seven darvī-homas (Ladle-libations), and six soma-yāgas. Hence Iṣṭi, Paśu, Soma, Homa merit equal importance in this sacrifice. It also partakes of the

Rājasūya and Vājapeya.

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nature of Satra as the total period covered by its performance exceeds a year.

There are some special injunctions as regards the gifts meant for priests. Two mirrors studded with gold are meant for Adharyu, a gold necklace for Udgātr, a round gold ornament for Hotṛ ; horses for the priests Prasostṛ and Pratihartṛ, ten pregnant cows are meant for Brahman, one sterile cow for Maitrāvaruṇa, a bullock for Brāhmanāchaṃsī, clothes for Neṣṭṛ and Potṛ, a cartload of barley for Acchāvāka and an ox to Agnīdh.

Aśvamedha :—

The importance and purpose of this sacrifice has been dealt with in the Book II of this work. Many domestic and wild animals are offered as oblations in this sacrifice of which the main victim is a horse whose fore-part is dark, hind-part is white, which is free from disease and has a special mark on its forehead. The horse is thoroughly washed by the priests aided by men of royal blood. The horse duly sanctified is let loose to roam about at its sweet will. The army and royal para-phernalia that attend on the horse to protect it from enemies have been enumerated in Book II.... under the caption "Army". The yajamāna i.e., the king who performs the sacrifice does not accompany the horse but stays at his capital near the sacrificial campus performing certain homas in honour of Viṣṇu. Till the return of the horse he should appoint some Brahmin and Kṣatriya lyricists who will sing songs to the accompaniment of lyre. In the day-time the Brahmin singers will sing the glory of the king relating to charity, sacrifice and acts of piety. In the evening the Kṣatriya singers will sing his glory relating to his deeds of valour, victory in war etc. While the horse roams about many homas are performed relating to the different limbs and diverse functions of the horse. The Adhvaryu offers oblations in the Dākṣiṇa fire for the safe movement of the stallion and, after sunset, the Dhṛti libations are offered in the Āhavanīya fire to ensure the success of the sacrifice. After the return of the horse the main sacrifice takes place. The chief

Aśvamedha

Details of the horse-sacrifice.

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queen, Mahiṣī anoints the body of the horse and places a hundred and one gold coins in its mane and tail. At this stage a debate consisting of solution of riddles called 'Brahmodya' in Br. texts takes place between the superintending priest and the Hotṛ. Another such debate takes place before the Sviṣṭakṛt offerings between Hotṛ and Adhvaryu, Brahman and Udgātṛ and between the sacrificer (Yajamāna) and Adhvaryu. Twentyone stakes are placed near the altar for the different animal offerings. The horse is fully caparisoned and thirteen animals are tied to the thirteen different parts of the horse's body. Altogether three hundred and ninety animals are tied to the twentyone stakes. This is according to the Taittirīya recension whereas according to the Mādhyandina recension 360 wild animals and 349 domestic animals are necessary. The sacrificial horse is laid on a blanket soaked in butter with its head towards the east and legs facing the north and then it is throttled to death. The three wives of the king—Mahiṣī the chief queen, Vāvātā the favourite queen and Parivṛkti the queen belonging to the śūdra caste attend on the horse with their royal retinue. The chief queen Mahiṣī lies down by the side of the dead horse and a blanket is thrown over her. She catches hold of the genital organ of the horse exhorting the animal in slang language. The priest also converses with the queens in slang language in a bantering tone. Then the deceased horse is dissected and different organs are extracted for oblation. The blood is preserved in a vessel for Sviṣṭakṛt oblations. The different organs of the horse and other animals are offered along with butter in the Āhavanīya fire. These offerings are followed by Sviṣṭakṛt homa where the horse's blood is offered as oblation and this homa, again, is followed by the usual Patnī-saṃyāja ceremony. On the day following a Soma-sacrifice having the Atirātra saṃsthā is performed followed by a Paśuyāga. The sacrifice terminates in the concluding ablution ceremony known as Avabhṛtha. After the ablution three homas are performed on the head of a person born of Atri line (gotra), shorn of hair, perspiring continuously, possessing cat's eyes and suffering from leprosy. The leper is to be paid a hundred pieces of gold as gift. This ceremony is followed by a sacrifice covering a year where animals prescribed for each season are offered as oblation. The

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Aśvamedha sacrifice terminates on completion of this annual animal sacrifice.

The thirteenth Kāṇḍa of the S.B. deals with Aśvamedha, Puruṣamedha, Sarvamedha and Pitṛmedha sacrifices.

Puruṣamedha :

Puruṣamedha is also a variation of Soma sacrifice like Aśvamedha. It is neither Ekāha nor Satra as it consists of five days ; hence it is of the Ahīna type of sacrifice. Instead of animals human beings (Puruṣa) are offered as oblations in this rite as the very name signifies but this offering is only symbolical and not actual. The human victim was neither strangled to death nor dissected ; he was released after Upākāraṇa i.e., after being touched with the holy water. Altogether 198 human victims are symbolically offered varying in their castes and professions. The major victims of this huge list have been enumerated in Book I under 'Occupations and Industries'. Besides human beings goats are also offered as victims. After sanctification human victims are regarded as deified souls that have attained union with godhead. The famous Puruṣa-Sūkta[1] of the Veda is recited when the victims are regarded as the Supreme god. From the term Puruṣa-medha some scholars have been led to infer that actual sacrifice of human beings existed in the pre-Vedic or early Vedic age but that conjecture is not corroborated by any passage of the Saṃhitā, Br. or Śrauta-Sūtra. That the human victim was always released after due purificatory rites is evident from the Śunaḥ-śepa anecdote of the A.B. This is why Śunaḥ-śepa is surprised to find his father sharpening the scimitar to kill his son because his action runs counter to the prevalent practice. Observes the erudite Vedic scholar Cinnasvāmī Śāstri in "Yajña-tattvaprakāśa',—'Actual slaughter of human being in Puruṣamedha is never heard in any recension of the Veda or in any Śrauta-sūtra'.[1] Instead of human beings goats are offered as victims according to the rites of Pāśu-yāga.

Puruṣamedha.

1. Third part, page 122,—'Kasyāmapi śākhāyāṃ kvacidapi vā śrauta-sūtre Puruṣamedhe puruṣasya hiṃsāyā aśravaṇāt'.

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Observes the S.B. in clear terms,—'If human beings are actually offered (as victims) in that case man would eat man's flesh ; hence the human victim is released after Paryagni-Karaṇa ceremony.'[2] The priests and Yajamāna partake of the leavings of oblations ; hence if men are actually slaughtered and offered as oblation priests will have to eat human flesh. This passage of S.B. lends support to our findings stated above.

According to the S. B. the sacrifice meant for the five days are Agniṣṭoma, Ukthya, Atirātra, Ukthya and Agniṣṭoma, one for each day respectively in succession.

After performing this sacrifice the sacrificer gives all his wealth to the priests and retires to the forest. Hence the main object of this sacrifice seems to stir up the spirit of renunciation in man by proving the ephemeral nature of the world-show.

Sarvamedha :

Sarvamedha.

This is also a variety of Soma sacrifice covering thirty-four days. Oblations are offered in the Āhavanīya fire placed on an altar made of bricks. The fifth sutyā partake of the nature of the middle sutyā of the Aśvamedha whereas the sixth one resembles the middle sutyā of the Puruṣamedha. In the latter the human victims are released after sanctification. In the seventh libation rice, paddy, etc., befitting Aryan food are cooked and offered in the fire. Soma plants, and creepers which wither away after yielding fruits are chopped to pieces and offered as oblation. In the sixth sutyā after releasing the human victims goats are strangled and offered as oblation.

This sacrifice is performed with a view to gain every kind of food.

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2. 1··6-2-13,—'Puruṣa mā saṃntiṣṭhipo yadi sasthāpayiṣyati puruṣa eva puruṣamatsyati'.

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Sautrāmanī :

It is an expiatory sacrifice performed for any excess comitted in the drink of Soma. It is a variety of animal sacrifice. It is not a soma sacrifice but has been classified by authors of Śrauta-sūtras as a Haviryajña ; the principal offering as recorded in Br. texts consists of surā which has been substituted by milk now-a-days. This sacrifice admits of two varieties, viz., Caraka-Sautrāmaṇī and Kaukila-Sautrāmaṇī. The Caraka form seems clearly to be a reference to the school of the Black Yajurveda, which is often so named. Three animals are prescribed as victims in this variety of Sautrāmaṇī,—a grey-coloured goat dedicated to god Aśvin, a ram meant for goddess Sarasvatī and another ram for the Moon god. According to the practice of Niruḍha-paśubandha the three victims are to be offered simultaneously. After offering the omenta of animals libations of Surā (wine) are to be offered. As wine is prohibited in the Kaliyuga, iron age, Āpastamba and other authors of Śrautasūtras have prescribed milk as its substitute. The libation of surā is prepared from various kinds of herbs in a wonderful way and hairs of a lion, a tiger and a wolf are mixed in the wine. Three cups are used for containing the surā. The deities of the animal sacrifice are also the deities in this sacrifice. Three rice-paps are offered to Indra, Savitṛ and Varuṇa respectively. The accessory rites known as Prayāja, Anuyāja and Saṃyāja should be performed according to convention. The sacrifice concludes with Avabhṛtha iṣṭi. In Kaukili Sautrāmaṇī the number of animals differ from that of Caraka one. There are five animals in this variety dedicated to Indra, Aśvin, Sarasvatī, Indra and Indra-vāyū. On the fourth day of the rite these victims are offered according to the fourth day of Soma sacrifice. The oblations of surā, milk and of omenta are also offered along with animal offerings. The sacrificer takes his seat on a chair made of Muñjā grass with silver under his left foot and gold under his right foot. The thirtytwo offerings of fat are then made. The remnant of fat is sprinkled on the sacrificer till it flows out of his mouth. The Adhvaryu touches him and his servants lift him up from the seat gradually ; first he is lifted knee-high, then navel-high, and then up to the

Sautrāmaṇī.

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mouth. The sacrificer then steps on a tiger-skin symbolizing his attainment of lordship. A milk offering to Mitra and Varuṇa, and a bull for Indra conclude the rite.

Dvādaśāha :

Dvādaśāha (twelve-day) sacrifice merits importance as it is the model for sacrifices that partake of the nature of both Ahīna and satra. From the point of view of the sacrificer, usage of the root 'yaj', injunctions for gifts (dakṣiṇā) etc., it is akin to the Ahīna type of sacrifice whereas from the perspective of number of priests, details of ceremony and certain injunctions it resembles a satra. Like a satra it also begins and terminates with an Atirātra. Just as Agniṣṭoma is the model of all Ekāha sacrifices, Dvādaśāha similarly is the model of all Ahīna Satras which require less than 360 days for their completion. As stated before, Gavāmayana is the model for satras covering more than 360 days. Dvādaśāha needs thirtysix days for its performance. The first twelve days are meant for Dīkṣā. The following twelve days are employed in performing Upasad rites. On the twentyfourth day a Paśu-Yāga dedicated to Agni and Soma is performed after the completion of Upasad. Twelve Sutyās cover the last twelve days. The sacrifice concludes with Avabhṛtha iṣṭi explained before. The first day of this variety of sacrifice is called Prāyaṇīya and the last day Udayanīya. The Saṃsthās for the twelve days have been specially prescribed which very according to the two main variation of this sacrifice called Bharata-dvādaśāha and Byūḍha-dvādaśāha. In the Bharata type the first day and the twelfth day are Atirātra ; the second and eleventh days are Agniṣṭoma and the remaining days are ukthya. The day preceding the last Atirātra is termed Mahāvrata. In the Byūḍha variety the first and the last day are Atirātra ; Pṛṣṭhyaṣaḍaha occupies the six days from the second to the seventh day ; the tenth hay is Avivakyam and Chandoma falls on the eighth, ninth and eleventh days.

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BOOK III

CHAPTER III

The Origin & Development of Priesthood :—

The origin of priesthood and the position of the priest in the social and economic set up of the Vedic age, the superiority to other castes and relation with the king, his importance as the chief adviser of the ruler have been discussed under 'The Position of the priest' in Book I. Originally the Purohita or the royal chaplain was the chief adviser of the king in matters both spiritual and secuar just as Bṛhaspati was the Purohita or Chief adviser and guide of Indra. Every monarch or ruling chief had his domestic priest who was invariably a brahmin and who may be termed the Prime Minister, an important organ of administration. Besides these priests who were royal chaplains there were also other priests who performed rituals and sacrificial rites and were invited by the king or other sacrificers when important sacrifices were performed. The rituals were very simple in the early Vedic age and the number of priests was small but as the rituals swelled in bulk and the sacrifices increased in number considerably and became complicated in form the number of priests also increased for the smooth functioning of the sacrificial machinery. For the purpose of sacrifice priests are indispensable. 'The gods do not accept obla ions from hands of one who has no priest.'[1] declares A.B. in clear terms. The king, also, is no exception to this rule. If he desires to perform any sacrifice he will have to appoint priests for that purpose. The A.B. thus enjoins in categorical terms,—'The gods do not partake of the oblations offered by a king who is without a priest ; hence

1. 'Na vai apurohitasya devā valimaśnuvanti'.

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a king bent on performing sacrifice should appoint a brāhmaṇa as priest first'.[2] Priesthood was indispensable not only to gods and men but also to the Asuras or demons. The demons even could not do without a priest. The S.B. (1-1-4-14) mentions the names of Kilāta and Ākuli as priests of Asuras. In the post-Vedic age the famous Śukrācārya became their priest and preceptor who pitted his wits against Bṛhaspati, the priest of the gods when the demons measured their strength with the gods.

Importance of the office of priest.

As a rule, four priests are necessary for performing a sacrifice, viz., Hotṛ, Adhvaryu, Udgātṛ and Brahman. The Ṛgvedic priest is called Hotṛ who invokes the deities in a sacrifice reciting verses from the R.V. The priest of the Yajurveda is termed Adhvaryu ; his task is an arduous one as he is entrusted with the work of preparing the altar, digging the fire-pits, cooking the oblations like rice-pap, porridge caru etc., offering oblations and allied paraphernalia of rites and ceremonies connected with the sacrifice. Sacrifice is called 'Adhvara' and because he keeps the sacrifice going or looks after the smooth functioning of the rituals he is aptly designated as Adhvaryu ; Yāska, the author of Nirukta says,—'Adhvaraṃ Yunakti iti adhvaryu,' i.e., 'he is called Adhvaryu as he sets the sacrifice in motion'. The Sāmavedic priest is called Udgātṛ whose duty is to chant hymns from the Sāmaveda to praise and please the gods. The fourth priest is the superintending priest of the sacrifice called Brahman who is versed in all the three vedas, ṚK, Sāman and Yajuṣ. Brahman is responsible for smooth conduction, safe completion and any flaw of the sacrifice. Hence he is called 'the physician of the sacrifice as he mends the flaws of the rites to make the function flawless'.[3] In course of time as ages rolled on, sacrifices became more and more complicated and sessional sacrifices termed Sattras came into existence ; hence as it became impossible for four priests to perform all the rites, the number of priests swelled

2. 8-40-1,—'Na ha vā apurohitasya rājño devā annamadanti tasmād rājā yakṣyamāṇo brāhmaṇaṃ puro dadhhīta'.

3. A.B. 5-25-9,—'Yajñasya haiva bhiṣak yat brahmā, yajñayaiva tat bheṣajaṃ kṛtvā harati'.

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in number, three priests being given as assistants to each priest. Thus we find four Ṛgvedic priests, four Yajurvedic priests, four Sāmavedic priests and four Brahmans making sixteen in all. The four Rgvedic priests consist of Hotṛ, Maitrāvaruṇa, Acchāvāka and Grāvastut ; the group of Yajurvedic priests comprises Adhvaryu, Pratiprasthātṛ, Neṣṭṛ and Unnetṛ ; the Sāmavedic priests are Udgātṛ, Prastotṛ, Pratihatṛ and Subrahmaṇya while Brahman, Brāhmaṇacchansī, Agnīdhra and Potṛ go to the composition of the group of Brahmans.

The A.B. (5-25-7) thus recounts the origin of the four principal priests along with the origin of the three Vedas. Prajāpati practised penance ; the three elements of earth, welkin region (antarikṣa) and firmanent were born of that penance which gave birth to Agni (fire), Vāyu (wind) and Āditya (the sun) respectively. 'The R.V. was born of Agni, Yajurveda of Vāyu and S.V. of the sun. Prajāpati created the priest called Hotṛ from the R.V., Adhvaryu from the Y.V., Udgātṛ from S.V. From the essence of these three sacred lores Brahman was created'.[4] The word 'Ṛtvik' is the regular term for sacrificial priest covering all the different kinds of priests employed at the sacrifice. All the priests must be brāhmaṇas. The Ṛgveda mentions the names of performing priests in the fifth verse of the famous Nābhānediṣṭha hymn (1-162). They are only six in number viz., Hotṛ, Adhvaryu, Avayāj, Agnimindha, Grāvagrābha and Śaṃstṛ. Four of these names viz., the last four are obsolete and their counterparts of the later Vedic age are as follows : 'Avayāj' is the Pratiprasthātṛ ; 'Agnimindha' means, as the very term signifies, he who kindles the fire i.e., the Agnīdhra priest. Grāvagrābha became the Grāvastut and Śaṃstṛ the Maitrāvaruṇa of the Brs. Max Müller ascribes a comparatively later date (1000-800 B. C.) to the Nābhānediṣṭha hymn whereas Martin Haug pleads for a remote antiquity refuting the arguments of Max Müller.

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4. 5-25-7,—'Rgveda evāgnerajāyata, yajurvedo vāyoḥ, sāmavada ādityāt ; sa ṛcaiva hautramakarot, yajuṣā ādhvaryavaṃ sāmnā udgītham tadetat trayyai vidyāyai śukraṃ tena brahmatvamakarot'.

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Haug's arguments are sound and convincing. The offices of the priests called Hotṛ, Adhvaryu and Agnīdhra are regarded as very ancient and were known to both the Vedic Aryans and Iranians. That is to say, these priests came into existence when the Indo-Aryans and Indo-Iranians lived together. The Hotṛ and Adhvaryu stand for the zotā and Rathwi (now corrupted to Raspi) priests of the Zend Avesta. The early vedic form of the name 'Agnīdhra' was, as we have seen, Agnimindha which is a tell-tale designation and means 'he who lights and feeds the fire'. The antiquity of the office of Agnīdhra is proved by its reference in the R.V. and there is reason to believe that this office came into existence when the Indians and Iranians lived together because the "Rathwi" of the Zoroastrian ritual which is an equivalent of Adhvaryu is called 'Ātarevakso' i.e., he who feeds the fire. The term 'Ātar' in Zend means 'fire'. Similarly, the office of the priest Grāvastut called Grāvagrābha in the R.V. is an old one as in the Parsi ritual also a priest is met with who squeezes the soma juice. As the very name suggests Grāvagrābha also holds pieces of stones for extracting the Soma juice. The extraction of soma juice is called Savanam in the Brs. and Havanam in the Avesta. The priest Pratisprasthātṛ appears to have been an assistant to the Adhvaryu from the early Ṛgvedic days. In the A.B. the two Aśvins are called the two Adhvaryus which expression leads us to conclude that one is a Adhvaryu and the other is his constant companion Pratiprasthātṛ. From the verses 2-37-2, 8-2-4 etc., of the R.V. we may infer the existence of plurality of Adhvaryus during the age of the R.K. Saṃhitā. R.V. 2-1-2, enumerates the names of seven priests, viz., Hotṛ, Potṛ, Neṣṭṛ, Agnīdh, Praśāstṛ, Adhvaryu and Brahman. The number of seven stated above probably explains the phrase 'seven Hotṛs' occurring frequently in the R.V. The office of the Superintending priest Brahman did not

The antiquity of the offices of Hotṛ., Adhvaryu, Agnidhra, Grāvastut & Pratiprasthātṛ.

5. History of Ancient Sanskrit Literature, Page 55.

6. Introduction to his edition of the A.B.

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exist in the early Ṛgvedic age when only two types of priests existed, viz., those belonging to the category of Hotṛ and Adhvaryu. Like the Brahman the Sāmavedic priest Udāgtṛ and his assistants are not heard of in the R.V.

Evolution of the offices of Brahman and Udgātṛ in the later Vedic age.

The separation of the offices of Hotṛ and Adhvaryu marks the first step in the development of the sacrificial art. The introduction of Brahman and Udgātṛ marks a new epoch in the history of the sacrificial liturgy. These two offices were introduced after the Indo-Iranian separation. The introduction of the office of Brahman heralds a new era in the history of the sacrifice. The origin of the office of Brahman priest is pre-Brāhmaṇa in age. The name of

Difference between the Brahman of the R.V. and that of the later Vedic age.

Brahman as a priest occurs in the R.V. in the sense of one of the performing priests only of the soma ritual and not as the supervising priest. Later on this Brahman priest was designated as Brāhmaṇācchaṃsin to distinguish him from the principal priest called Brahman who supervised the work of other peists and whose office came into existence in the later Vedic age. In addition to the sixteen priests enumerated above some schools mention the name of Sadasya as the seventeenth priest whereas according to Pūrva Mīmāṃsā the sacrificer, Yajamāna is recognised as the seventeenth priest as he has to perform certain rites.

Due to the supreme importance of the sacrifice in the Vedic age the priests enjoyed a unique position. Both the king and the subjects revered them and relied on them for both material prosperity and spiritual merit as these could be procured through sacrifice alone. Sacrifice promised not only rewards in the other world and heavenly bliss but also worldly gains in the form of wealth, food, cattle, son, long life etc. Monarchs could attain kingship, imperial suzerainty and paramount sovereignty through sacrifices alone such as Rājasūya Vājapeya, Aśvamedha etc. Hence the priests were held in awe and veneration. None dared to incur their displeasure ; rather the sacrificers tried to please them by paying sacrificial fee called Dakṣiṇā which will be our next topic for discussion. Rightly

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does the A.B. remark,—'Ṛtviji hi sarvo yajñaḥ pratiṣṭhitaḥ' (2-9-8), i.e., 'the whole sacrifice is established in the priest'.

Sacrificial Fee (Dakṣiṇā) :—

Payment of sacrificial fee in kinds or coins is compulsory in every sacrifice. It is called Dakṣiṇā. The performance of a sacrifice is incomplete and futile without dakṣiṇā. The sacrificer desires to attain heaven by means of the 'apūrva', invisible merit or piety caused by the performance of the sacrifice. The sacrifice goes to heaven and the fee which is a part of the sacrifice accompanies it ; hence holding fast to the fee the sacrificer also goes to the world of heaven. Thus without the sacrificial fee the sacrifice is like a cart without the bullocks. Observes the A.B. 'Dakṣiṇā is the fore-runner of the sacrificer to the world of heaven). Just as a cart without the Bullocks harms the driver and is useless likewise a sacrifice without the fee harms the sacrificer ; hence it is said—fee, however small, must be paid in the sacrifice'.[1] If a sacrificer is financially handicapped he may not offer rich gifts to the priests but, in the words of the S.B., 'he should pay according to his means ; the sacrifice must not go without the sacrificial fee'.[2] The sacrificer who does not pay the fee not only forfeits his claim to the heavenly bliss promised by the sacrifice but is also subjected to sufferings caused by the visitation of divine wrath. The S.B. states that the Āptyas wipe off their sin on such a person which accrued to them when Indra slew the son of Tvastṛ, Viśvarūpa.

Importance of fee in the sacrifice.

Payment of fee is compulsory.

Result of non-payment of fee.

Just as the sacrificer is enjoined to pay the sacrificial fee in kinds or coins according to his capacity as a compulsory part of the sacrifice, similarly the priests are also enjoined not to be overgreedy or make any bargaining as to the dakṣiṇā. Just as the sacrificer forfeits his rewards in heaven for non-payment of the fee, the priest also is shut out from the world

1. 6-30-9—'Dakṣiṇā vai yajñānāṃ purogavī yathā ha vā..... dātavyaiva yajñe dakṣiṇā bhavatyalpikāpi.'

2. 11-1-4-4—'Yat śaknuyāt dadyāt na adakṣiṇaṃ haviḥ syāt.'

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of heaven if he be greedy and bargains with the sacrificer over the fee. Thus the Brs. caution both the sacrificer and the priest against any underhand means and exhort both the parties to be honest and judicious in the offering and acceptance of the fee respectively, 'Let there be no bargaining as to sacrificial fees, for by bargaining the priests are deprived of their place in heaven'.[3]

The sacrificial fee is regarded as an auspicious thing which causes the well-being of the sacrifice. 'Sacrificial fees tend to the welfare or well-being (śubha) of the sacrifice', says P.B.[4] Again, the fee is to be paid to the priests alone and not to other persons who are connected with the sacrifice but do not play the role of priests. The S.B. categorically states,—'The dakṣiṇā is to be paid to the priests and not to the non-priests'.[5]

Details of sacrificial fees to be paid in each sacrifice have been dealt with under 'The forms of sacrifice' in general. The Br. texts record the sacrificial gifts paid by the sacrificers in different sacrifices performed in the past which are varied in their details and range from a simple piece of cloth to the gift of thousand elephants, thousand pieces of gold, nay, even the whole kingdom. Fee is paid mostly in kinds and sometimes in coins of gold and silver. Some dakṣiṇā are enumerated below as illustrations in point. In the Agnihotra sacrifice a milch cow is offered to the priest. In the Sarvamedha and Puruṣamedha sacrifices along with other gifts land was given as the principal fee. In the thirty-three gifts to be paid in the Sautrāmaṇī-Yāga a mare with a foal forms one of the items. In the Aśvamedha the emperor is enjoined upon to give a hundred pieces of gold and a hundred pieces of silver. In the Puruṣamedha the sacrificer is enjoined upon to give his all (sarvasva) to the priests and retire to the forest on completion of the sacrifice. In the Rājasūya sacrifice the gifts consist of two golden mirrors to the Adhvaryu,

Illustrations of sacrificial fees.

3. S.B. 9-5-2-16,—'Dakṣiṇāsu tveva na saṃvaditavyaḥ, saṃvadenaiva ṛtvijaḥ alokāḥ iti.'

4. 16-1-14—'Śubho vā etā yajñasya yaddakṣiṇāḥ.'

5. 4-3-4-5—'Tasmādṛtvigbhya eva dakṣiṇā dadyāt, nānṛtvigbhyaḥ.'

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one gold necklace to the Udgātṛ, one round gold ornament to the Hotṛ, one horse each to the Prastotṛ and Pratihatṛ, ten cows to the Brahman, a sterile cow to Maitrāvaruṇa, a bullock to Brāhmaṇācchansin, two pieces of cloth to Neṣṭṛ and Potṛ, one cartload of barley to Acchāvāka and an ox to the Agnīdhra priest. As monarchs and emperors were the sacrificers of the Rājasūya, Vājapeya and the Aśvamedha sacrifices, the fees were costly consisting of gold, silver, elephants, horses, ox, rich maidens putting on gaudy dresses and gold ornaments etc. The A.B. records fabulous gifts paid by monarchs during their consecration ceremony or the Rājasūya sacrifice to the priests which comprise ten thousand cows (8-37-7), a thousand pieces of gold, land and animals (8-39-6), a thousand elephants (8-39-8), millions of cows (8-39-6) and the like, King Aṅga in return for his great consecration ceremony offered ten thousand elephants, ten thousand rich maid servants wearing gold necklaces, millions of cows and eightyeight thousand white horses as gifts to his priest Udamaya Ātreya (A.B. 8-39-8). In the Somayāga the fees consists of one hundred and twelve cows, one horse, ass, goat, sheep, mule, paddy, māṣa lentils, sesamum and barley. In addition to these a rich sacrificer is asked to offer elephants, cloth and gold also.

Distribution of Dakṣiṇā.

Regarding the distribution of the gifts amongst the officiating priests the following principle was observed in the age of the Brs. One half of the fee goes to the Superintending priest Brahman and the other half to the remaining priests. 'Half (of the fee) belongs to the Brahman and the remaining half to the other priests,' observes the A.B.[6] This is also corroborated to by the J.B.[7]

Gifts other than sacrificial fees

Gifts other than sacrificial fees are also recorded in the Brs. and Upaniṣads offered by kings and rich patrons to the brahmins and learned sages. King Janaka the renowned saintly king who was a great patron of learning and whose court was a centre of learned discourses and debates

6. 5-25-9—'Ardhameva brahmaṇa āsārdhamitareṣāmṛtvijāṃ.'

7. 3-17-5—'Ardhā ha sma vai purā brahmaṇe dakṣiṇā nayantīti ardhā itarebhyaḥ ṛtvigbhyaḥ.'

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declared valuable prizes to the winner of debates. Thus he made a gift of hundred cows to the sage Yājñavalkya (S.B. 11-3-1-4), a thousand cows to the same sage (S.B. 11-6-3-1), a hundred cows with their horns studded with gold (B.U.). King Hariscandra offered a hundred cows to the poor brahmin Ajigarta in exchange of the latter's son Śunaḥśepa.

Besides ensuring heavenly rewards and worldly prosperity and pleasing the priests the sacrificial fees or other gifts may be viewed from another aspect. By these gifts the kings placated the priestly class whose support was essential for the upkeep of the social structure and for smooth administration. The priests pleased and helped the rulers by performing sacrifices through which kings attained imperial power and paramount sovereignty. In return the kings lavihsed rich presents on the priests. Thus through mutual co-operation the ruling class and the priestly class held the balance of power keeping under subjection the other two communities.

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BOOK III

CHAPTER IV.

The Spirit underlying the Form of Sacrifice :—

Behind the sacrificial liturgy and its vast paraphernalia, behind the externals of the sacerdotal religion we find the faint glimmerings of the spirit of religion, the essence of sacrifice.

Yajña or the sacrifice is looked upon as an organic whole. It is often described as an organic being or puruṣa termed Yajñapuruṣa in the Brāhmaṇa texts. Its different aspects are compared to the limbs of a living being. In A.B. 2-8-3, 4 we come across a detailed comparison of these limbs, e.g., Prātaranuvāka is the head of the sacrifice, the two grahas called Upāṃśu and Antaryāma are its two breaths—prāṇa and apāna etc. The S.B. also refers to this organic conception of sacrifice. 'Puruṣa is the sacrifice. Its head is Havirdhānam ; its mouth is Āhavanīya. Its two arms are represented by the Agnidhrīya and Mārjālīya.'[1] 'The sacrifice is a great god' observes the G.B.(P), (2-16) ; 'Eṣa vai mahān devo yad yajñaḥ'. The S.B. 6-1-1- identifies the fire-altar with the primal Puruṣa called Prajāpati, the lord of creation. 'That same person became Prajāpati. And that Person which became Prajāpati is this very Agni (Fire-altar), who is now being built.'[2] While dealing with the doctrine of creation which will be taken up later on we shall see how the erection of this fire-altar stands for a symbol of the reconstruction of the universe, in the shape of Prajāpati. In this

Conception of sacrifice as an organic whole imbued with spirit and intelligence.

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1. S.B. 3-5-3-1-, 2, 3.4—'Puruṣo vai yajñaḥ ; 'śira evāsya yat havirdhānam.'

'Mukhamevāsyāhavaaīyaḥ' ; Bāhū evāsyāgnidhrīyaśca mārjālīyaśca'.

2. 6-1-1-5—'Sa yaḥ saḥ puruṣaḥ prajāpatirabhavadayameva sa yo'yamagniścīyate.'

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mystic symbolism the human sacrificer or Yajamāna is equated with Agni which is the divine counterpart of the human sacrificer ; Agni or the god of Fire, again, is equated with the lord of creation Prajāpati. Thus the human sacrificer is identified with Prajāpati through his identification with Agni. Again, the fire-altar and fire are identified which identification leads to the equation of both Prajāpati and Yajamāna with the fire-altar or sacrifice. The Primal Being which is the fountained of all creation known as Puruṣa described and eulogised in the Hymn of creation of the Ṛgveda (X-90) has assumed the name of Prajāpati in the Brāhmaṇas. 'But Prajāpati is himself Time, and Time is in the long run death, so that the sacrificer himself becomes death, and by that act rises superior to death, and is for ever removed from the world of illusion and trouble to the world of ever-lasting bliss. In this the true nature of Prajāpati and of the sacrificer is revealed as intelligence, and the Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa urges the seeker for truth to meditate upon the self, made up of intelligence and endowed with a body of spirit, a form of light and an ethereal nature'.[3] Thus we find a deeper, significance, a spiritual and speculative meaning underlying the mechanical sacerdotalism or liturgical paraphernalia. Sacrifice is not only looked upon as a cold formality or enormously fabricated ritual but also as an organic whole imbued with spirit and intelligence. In all the Brāhmaṇa texts time and again sacrifice (yajña) has been identified with Viṣṇu the supreme deity. The expression 'Yajño vai Viṣṇuḥ'—'Sacrifice is Viṣṇu' occurs again and again.'[4] Sometimes sacrifice is also identified with Prajāpati or Agni. In the Vedic pantheon whenever a deity is invoked and eulogised he or she is worshipped as the supreme godhead. This feature of Vedic religion is a far cry from polytheism of the ancient Greek religion. To differentiate this outstanding feature of Vedic religion

Identification of Puruṣa, Prajāpati, Agni, fire-altar sacrificer & sacrifice with one another.

Identification of sacrifice with Viṣṇu, Prajāpati & Agni.

3. Cambridge History of India, I, Page 142.
4. S.B. 1-7-1-21, 1-9-3-9, 3-6-3-3.

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from Greek polytheism Max Muller has coined a term Henotheism or Kathenotheism which means whenever a deity is propitiated he or she is worshipped as the supreme Godhead. In the Greek pantheon the gods and goddesses are not viewed or worshipped from that angle of vision ; they are endowed with limited powers. Thus this special feature of the Vedic religion places the deities on a equal footing and from this perspective Viṣṇu, Prajāpati and Agni are identical notwithstanding the attributes peculiar to each deity that mark out one from the other. Hence when sacrifice is equated with a deity the sense is that it is identified with the supreme deity or Godhead. Again, the Yajamāna or sacrificer is identified with the sacrifice or yajña. 'Yajamāna is verily the yajña', says A.B.[5] Hence the sacrificer is also identified with the supreme Deity. To put it in other words, the end or purpose of sacrifice is identification of the sacrificer with the presiding deity of the sacrifice. Through sacrifice the sacrificer attains the union with, and the same form and place (sājujya, sārūpya and sālokya) of the deity. Even the different gods attained their status of godhood through the performance of sacrifice. 'By worshipping Yajña, i.e., performing sacrifice the gods became the gods they now are'.[6] Thus the sacrificer attains the status of the deity to whom the sacrifice is offered. As the deity is immortal, the sacrificer also attains immortality. When an oblation (āhuti) is offered in a sacrifice the external form of the offering is called 'Homa' 'which consists in offering oblations in the sacrificial fire pit.'[7] But the contemplation accompanying this offering, the mental aspect of the external act called 'Bhāvanā' constitutes yāga.[8] The external oblations

Henotheism of the Vedic pantheon.

Identification of the sacrificer with the supreme deity through his identification with the sacrifice.

Difference between Homa and Yāga.

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5. 1-5-2—'Yajamāno vai yajñaḥ.'

6. S.B. 1-5-2-6—'Tenopāvṛttena devā ayajanta teneṣṭvā etadabhavan yadidaṃ devāḥ.'

7. 'Vaidhe ādhāre haviṣaḥ prakṣepo homaḥ.'

8. 'Yāgastu bhāvanā-pradhānaḥ.'

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are physical visible ones whereas the mental offerings are invisible psychical ones which go to constitute the essense of sacrifice of which external offerings are the form. Shorn of its mental or contemplative aspect sacrifice defeats its very purpose. 'The sacrificer attains immortality through the invisible mental offerings', says the A.B.[9]

The mental factor behind yāga.

This intended union of the sacrificer with the deity is also clear from certain sacrificial rites. The following ceremony is an instance in point. After the completion of a particular sacrifice the sacrificer prepares a miniature image of himself with the Kuśa grass called Prastara and throws the same in the sacrificial fire pit. When the image is burnt up the sacrificer thinks his mortal frame is burnt up and his disembodied soul has attained union with the deity. He thus considers himself to be one with Viṣṇu and takes three strides covering the sacrificial altar uttering the Vedic hymn,—'Here Viṣṇu strides placing three steps' etc.[10]

End of sacrifice.

Explaining the significance of the term 'Āhuti' or oblation the A.B. observes,—'Oblation of fire, oblation of butter and soma—all these oblations are offerings of immortality. All these oblations make one disembodied and immortal'.[11]

Of course this immortality is not equivalent to the final liberation of the individual soul—the doctrine of emancipation as adumbrated in the Upaniṣads, rather a far cry from it. The immortality attained through sacrifice means union with a personal deity and attainment of the latter's status, privilege and place in heaven after the sacrificer shuffles off his mortal coil ; in other words, it amounts to attainment of 'Devatva' or deityhood or divinity in heaven whereas the emancipation or Mokṣa of the Upaniṣads means complete absorption of the individual soul into the impersonal supreme Godhead or All-soul.

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9. A.B. 2-7-4—'Yā vai kāśca aśarīrā āhutahaḥ amṛtatvameva tābhiryajamāno jayati.'

10. 'Idaṃ Viṣṇuḥ vicakrame tredhā nidadhe padam.'

11. A.B. 2-7-4—'Agnyāhutiramṛtāhutirājyāhutiḥ somāhutireta vāśarīrā āhutayo yā vai kāścāśarīrā āhutayo'mṛtatvameva tābhiryaamāno jayati.'

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We shall take up and dilate on the personal and impersonal aspects of godhead of the Brāhmaṇas while dealing with the theology of the Brāhmaṇas.

The spirit of sacrifice never lost sight of.

Thus we find that the spirit or metaphysical aspect of sacrifice was never lost sight of though it was clouded by the huge paraphernalia of the externals of religion or huge mass of rituals and rites. The spirit and the form developed side by side and in the long run the spirit gained the upper-hand which tended to transcend ritualism or the so-called mechanical sacerdotalism. This transcendental tendency ultimately led to the metaphysics of the Araṇyakas which finally crystallised into the pilosophy of the Upaniṣads which decry external sacrifice and rituals in emphatic and unmistakable terms. The germ of this transcendental spirit which set in the anti-ritual reaction may be traced in the very Brāhmaṇa texts which are veritable epitomes of liturgies and rituals of sacrifice. Burdened with the vast mass and minute details of sacrificial rites people began to doubt and question the efficacy of the same in the age of the Brāhmaṇas. They not only doubted the efficacy of sacrifice but also attempted to prove the ill-effects of the same. They were quite in the dark as to whether a man achieved piety or incurred sin by performing sacrifices. Observes the S.B. in categorical terms,—'Men were possessed with unbelief (aśraddhā) ; those who sacrifice become sinners, and those who do not sacrifice become righteous or attain good.'[12] Thus a time came in the later Vedic age when people developed a sceptical attitude with regard to the utility of sacrifices and desisted from performing rituals. Urged on by the gods Bṛhaspati Āṅgirasa met the people and asked them the reason of their not performing sacrifices. They replied that they have stopped performance of sacrifices from a desire as to what for should they

The germ of Āraṇyaka and Upanisadic philosophy.

Reaction against rituals in the age of the Brs.

12. 1-2-5-24—'Aśraddhā manuṣyān viveda ye yajante pāpīyāṃsaste bhavanti ya u na yajante śreyāṃsaste bhavantīti.'

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sacrifice since those who performed sacrifices became greater sinners and those who did not became righteous or obtained good (śreyaḥ).[13] This challenge thrown by the people against the school of sacrifice had to be met by the priestly class. This challenge proves beyond a shade of doubt that already a mass movement was afoot against the sacrificial rites in the Brahmanical age or later vedic era. The cultured people realised that the external rites alone devoid of reverence or the mere utterance of hymns minus the mental factor failed to reach the gods. To make the sacrifice effective mind must accompany the utterance and the deed ; that is to say, the sacrificer must put his whole heart in the performance to prevent mechanical ritualism. 'Mind and speech when yoked together, convey the sacrifice to the gods.'[14] 'With mind and speech they truly perform sacrifice,[15] says the S.B. Importance was attached to reverence or belief without which sacrifice failed to achieve its goal. The importance of faith has been stated in clear terms in the Br. texts. Even gods are of lesser importance to him who has realised the importance of reverence. He knows sacrifice produces its result through reverence without the help of the gods. In the T.S. (7-1-8-2) we read of sage Atri who declares Śraddhā or reverence to be his deity. Śraddhā-deva. When he is in need of help or succour he does not appeal to the gods but invents proper rites in which he has full faith and thus disposes of his disabilities. In the words of the K.B. (7-4). 'He who sacrifices with reverence and faith his piety never wanes' ('Sa yaḥ śraddhadhāno yajate tasyeṣṭaṃ na kṣīyate'). The T.B. 3-12-3-2 observes,—'The goddess Śraddhā (Reverence) was the first product of Truth. Reverence maintains the universe and is the foundation of the world'. Commenting on this passage Sāyaṇa remarks,—'The Vedic and worldly (domestic) rites of a person devoid of reverence become futile'. In the

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13. 1-2-5-25—'Te hocu kiṃkāmyāḥ yajemahi ye yajante pāpīyāṃsaste bhavanti ya u na yajante śreyāṃsaste bhavantīti.'

14. S.B. 1-4-4-1—'Manaśca haiva vāk ca yujau devebhyo yajñaṃ vahataḥ.'

15. S.B. 3-5-3-11—'Yuñjate mana uta yuñjate dhiya iti manasā ca vai vācā ca yajñāṃ tanvate.'

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absence of earthly oblations reverence (śraddhā) alone has been enjoined to be offered mentally as oblation. This is known as Śraddhā-homa or offering of reverence. It is also termed Bhāvanā-homa as Bhāvanā or mental offering predominates here. The A.B. cites Agnihotra sacrifice as an instance in point. This sacrifice was a daily performance and was a compulsory rite for the Brahmins. They had to perform the sacrifice twice daily—once in the morning and once at dusk after the sun had set.

Importance of faith and reverence in sacrifice.

In ancient India a milch cow was specially reared in every Brahmin home to supply the milk necessary for daily oblations of this sacrifice. The cow was called Agnihotrī gābhī. If the whole milk meant for the offering got split by accident, another milch cow had to be procured to obtain milk. What is to be done if another cow was not available. The A.B. thus solves the problem. 'If another cow is not available, in that case offer the oblation with reverence.'[16] This offering of reverence was known as Śraddhā-home and the sacrificer had to utter the words,—'I offer reverence as oblation' ('ahaṃ śraddhāṃ juhomi'). The A.B. goes still farther and makes a memorable observation as follows. Now, Agnihotra had to be performed by the sacrificer jointly with his wife. Again, one could not be relieved of this performance in his life-time. In what manner, then, would a widower perform the sacrifice or keep up the continuity of his vow of Agnihotra if he did not desire a second marriage. The injunction for such a widower is that he should perform the sacrifice mentally. First the question is put,—'How a widower will perform the Agnihotra sacrifice ? The solution given reads thus ;—in the case of a widower 'śraddhā (reverence) is his wife and satya (truth) is the Yajamāna (sacrificer). Śraddhā and satya, reverence and truth make an ideal couple (uttamaṃ mithunaṃ) ; this couple conquers the heavenly

Emphasis on Reverence and Truth.

16. A.B. 5-25-2—'Ātveva śraddhāyai hotavyam.'

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regions'.[17] This performance is wholly mental having nothing to do with external ceremonies and oblations of Agnihotra. Hence it is called Mānasa Agnihotra or mental Agnihotra. This memorable passage drives home the fact that the Brāhmaṇa texts did not minimise the importance of reverence and mental attitude essentiaıly needed for the sacrifice though emphasis was laid on the details of rituals and externals of religion. Herein may be traced the beginnings of the Āraṇyaka philosophy which under-rates the value of external sacrifice and recommends mental sacrifice in its place. External purity derived from rituals and uttering of hymns is substituted by inner purity and meditation. Pointedly does Aitareya Āraṇyaka put the question,—'To what end shall we repeat the Veda ? to what purpose shall we sacrifice ? For, we sacrifice breath in speech and speech in breath'.[18] The discussion of Mānasa or mental Agnihotra of the A.B. referred to above culminates in the spiritual and internal Agnihotra ('ādhyātmikaṃ āntaram Agnihotram') recorded in Śānkhyāyana Āraṇyaka which observes,—'It is called spiritual inner Agnihotra.'[19] In that Agnihotra 'Prāṇa is the Āhavanīya, Apāna is the Gārhapatya ; Vyāna is Anvāhārya, Mind is Pacana. Manyu is smoke, worshipper is embers taken collectively, Śraddhā or Reverence is milk, speech is samit (sacrificial fuel), Truth is the offering and Wisdom, par excellence, is the soul.'[20] This description of spiritual and inner or mental Agnihotra at once drives home the fact that the external sacrifice underwent complete reorientation in the Āraṇyaka period being transformed into a sacrifice wholly mental

Mental sacrifiec acknowledged.

Germs of Āranyaka philosophy.

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17. A.B. 7-·2-10—'Apatnīko'gnihotraṃ kathamagnihotraṃ juhoti, śraddhā patnī satyaṃ yajamānaḥ śraddhā satyaṃ tadityuttamaṃ mithunaṃ, śraddhayā satyena mithunena svargān lokān jayatiti.'

18. 3-2-6-—'Kimarthā vayamadhyeṣāmahe, kimarthā vayaṃ yakṣāmahe vāci hi prāṇaṃ juhumaḥ prāṇe vā vācaḥ.'

19. 10-1—'Athāta ādhyātmikamāntaramagnihotramityācakṣate.'

20. 10-8,—'Tasya prāṇa evāhavanīyo'pāno gārhapatyo, vyāno'nvāhārya, pacano mano, dhūmo manyurarcayitā aṅgārāḥ, śraddhā payo vāk samit satyamāhutiḥ, prajñātmā.'

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and spiritual. The excessive ritualism of the Brāhmaṇas finds no place in the Āraṇyakas which record the reaction that naturally stirred the cultural minds produced by mechanical performance of sacrifices. Hence Āraṇyakas do not embody rules for sacrificial performances. Rather the mysticism and symbolism of the sacrifice and priestly philosophy find exposition in the Āraṇyakas. Meditation of the Absolute, rather than external performance is the essence of their teaching. The complicated sacrificial machinery of the Brāhmaṇas was replaced by a simple ceremonial. Thus the doctrine of knowledge or jñāna-kāṇḍa gained the upper-hand with relation to the path of action or karma-kāṇḍa. Thus the period of Āraṇyaka was an age of transition from the age of Brāhmaṇas to the Upaniṣadic era. The critical outlook of the Āraṇyakas with reference to ritualism is more accentuated in the Upaniṣads which cry down sacrifice or liturgy in unambiguous terms. Śvetaśvataropaniṣad and M.U. compare sacrifices to weak and leaky boats which cannot take us across the troubled waters of the world to the peaceful shore. 'Verily the boats of the sacrifice are weak.'[21] Muṇḍakopaniṣad calls those persons fools who are devoted to mere rites and ceremonies. Bṛhadāraṇyakopaniṣad compares those who offer oblations or sacrifices to Gods to animals catering to the comforts of their masters'[22]

Āraṇyaka—a transition from the Brāhmaṇas to the Upaniṣads.

From the above discussion it is quite clear that the Brāhmaṇas did not lose sight of the spirit of sacrifice though this spirit or essence was overburdened with the complicated form which gained in bulk as years rolled on. Due importance was attached to both inner and external purity and mental sacrifice was acknowledged and praised. We have seen how reverence was enjoined and eulogised. Reverence and truth were regarded as essence of yajña. Even without externals or rituals one

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21. M.U. 1-2-7—'Plavā hyete adṛḍhā yajñarūpāḥ.' The S.U. prescribes the boat of Brahman instead of the boat of sacrifice : 'Brahmoḍupena pratareta vidvān'.

22. B.U. 1-4-10—'Ātmā hyeṣāṃ sa bhavati.....yadetanmanuṣyā viduḥ.'

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could achieve the end of sacrifice through śraddhā and satya or reverence and truth. The S.B. observes,—'sacrifice is indeed reverence.'[23] In these references to and eulogy of reverence one may trace the germs of Bhakticult or the cult of devotion which assumed distinct shape later on.

Germ of Bhakti-cult.

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23. S.B. 9-1-1-16—'Yajño vai namaḥ.'

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BOOK III

CHAPTER V

Emergence of Popular Religious Cults :—

Beginnings of many popular religious creeds of modern India may be traced in the Brāhmaṇas. The above discussion conclusively proves the inception of the Bhakti-Cult in the age of the Brāhmaṇas which ultimately led to the emergence of new deities and new cults. The Vedic pantheon of the saṃhitā age underwent a reshuffling and re-orientation in this age. Some of the deities such as Viṣṇu, Rudra etc., took new shape and attributes and gained in importance in the later Vedic age. In the Ṛgvedic saṃhitā Viṣṇu is but one of the many forms and manifestations of the Sun-god'Sūrya'. Savitṛ, Uṣā, Aśvins, Bhaga, Sūrya, Viṣṇu, Puṣan Mitra, Varuṇa are nothing but different expressions of the Sun-god with relation to its different attributes and positions. Thus when the sun touches the zenith in the mid-day it is called Viṣṇu in the Ṛgvedic Saṃhitā. The sun looks smallest but is most powerful and scorching at that hour. This natural phenomenon gave rise to the mythology of the Purāṇa which describes Vāmana, the dwarf god as an incarnation of the Supreme god Viṣṇu. The sun rises at dawn in the eastern direction, touches the highest point of the firmanent at mid-day and sets in the west at dusk ; again it rises in the east next morn ; thus in three strides the sun traverses the whole universe. This natural phenomenon was interpreted as the conquering of the three worlds with three strides by the Vāmana avatāra or dwarf incarnation of lord Viṣṇu. Similar myths were spun round the nucleus of natural phenomena represented by other deities and demons such as Maruts,

Evolution of Viṣṇu-cult and Rudra-cult.

Viṣṇu in the R.V.

Germ of Vāmana Avatāra.

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Rudra, Vṛtra etc. This interpretation of mythological legends in the light of natural phenomena is thought of by many to be a discovery of modern genius or scholarship but it is highly interesting to note that there was a school of thinkers in the Vedic age who advocated this interpretation. The Nirukta which is one of the six Vedāngas bears glowing testimony to this fact. In the Ṛgveda Vṛtra is represented as a demon who withholds water in his stomach ; when Indra strikes the demon with his thunderbolt the latter lets out the water. Yāska, the author of Nirukta while discussing the characteristics of Vṛtra, remarks,—'Now, who is this Vṛtra. The mythologists say he is a demon born of Tvastṛ but we the authors or Nirukta hold he is nothing but the cloud. Lightning and water (clouds) combine to produce rain and that interaction of lightning and clouds is described in the simile of a battle (between Indra and Vṛtra).'[24] This is a memorable observation of the Nirukta which lends support to this view advocated by modern scholars and proves that such a school of interpretation existed in the later Vedic age. The beginning of these mythologies spun round the natural phenomena may be traced in the Brāhmaṇas though we miss full-fledged myths and legends which assumed distinct shape in the age of the Purāṇas. Gods Viṣṇu and Rudra of the Brāhmaṇa texts are a far cry from those of the Saṃhitās. We have thoroughly discussed above how Viṣṇu was gaining in importance and held in high esteem in the later Vedic age. The identification of the sacrifice with Viṣṇu which ultimately led to the identification of the sacrificer with god Viṣṇu indicates the growing position and reorientation of this deity. The sacrificer through a symbolical rite as noted above

Paurāṇic legends originated from Natural phenomena of the Veda.

Nirukta lends support to this view.

Viṣṇu and Rudra of the Brs.,— a far cry from those of the Saṃhitās.

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24. 'Tat ko vṛtraḥ ? Megha iti Nairuktāḥ ; Tvāṣṭro'sura ityaitihāsikāḥ. Apāṃ ca jyotiṣaśca miśrībhāvakarmaṇo varṣakarma jāyate tatropamārthena yuddhavarṇā bhavati'.

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attained to the status of Viṣṇu and the supreme goal of sacrifice was thought to be attainment of Viṣṇuhood or absorption in the personal deity Viṣṇu. The Yajamāna longed for this union so that he may enjoy the same status after his expiry. The germ of the Vāmana-avatāra or Dwarf Incarnation of Viṣṇu may be traced in the Brāhmaṇas as in the Saṃhitās. 'Vāmana (dwarf) is Viṣṇu', says the T.B.[25] The S.B. again, identifies Sungod with Brahman, the Supreme Godhead. 'That Āditya is Brahman.'[26] Viṣṇu is but the most powerful form of Āditya. Thus sacrifice came to be looked upon as a form of propitiation of the Supreme God Viṣṇu—a medium to achieve union with Viṣṇu. Thus one of the most popular religions of modern India, viz, the Viṣṇu-cult assumed distinct shape in the Brāhmaṇa era.

Evolution of Viṣṇu cult.

The origin of Śiva-cult may be traced in the eulogy of Rudra in the Yajurveda Saṃhitā and the Brāhmaṇas. Śiva is but an equivalent of Rudra which represents the terrific aspect of the said deity. Just as Viṣṇu was one of the many manifestations of the Sungod, viz, the sun when it touches the meridian, god Rudra also represented a natural phenomenon connected with storm, viz, the phenomenon of thunder. This is why in the tripartite classification of gods according to their abodes he is classed with the gods belonging to the welkin or aerial region (antarikṣa-sthāna). Some of the phenomena of the external nature are pleasing, exhilarating and benignant whereas others are awe-inspiring, destructive and malignant. The resplendent orb of the sun, the rosy dawn, the green earth, the azure firmament belong to the former category whereas the terrific storm, thunder, lightning, dark and foreboding clouds etc., representing wild freaks of nature belong to the latter group. In the R.V. Rudra is represented as discharging brilliant shafts towards both the heaven and the earth (7-46-3), as the slayer of cows and men with

Gradual evolution of the Rudra-Śiva cult from the R.V. to T.S., V.S. and Brs.

25. 1-2-5-5—'Vāmano vai Viṣṇuḥ.'
26. 7-4-1-14—'Asau vādityo brahma.'

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deadly weapons (1-114-10).[27] Here the destructive agency of the thunder and lightning seems to have been clearly in view. Thunder is always regarded as a dreaded terrific phenomenon which is a menace to human beings, animals and vegetable kingdom. Hence it is that malevolent attributes accompany the concept of Rudra. A.B. (3-13-9) thus recounts the birth of Rudra. When Prajāpati committed incest with his daughter the gods wanted to punish him for such heinous crime. As they failed to find a single god competent to punish Prajāpati they created a new deity from the tragic elements of all the gods combined together. That deity is termed Rudra who is the lord of all beings (Bhūtapati) and lord of beasts (Paśupati). Rudra asked a boon of the gods who created him that he should be made lord of all beasts and the gods readily granted this boon. Rudra hit Prajāpati with an arrow. We have discussed how the creator or Puruṣa of the Ṛgveda has turned into the Prajāpati, the lord of creation in the Brāhmaṇas, and Prajāpati, in his turn, as we find from Rudra's anecdote was yielding to Rudra who was gradually coming into the limelight as a popular deity since the days of the Yajurvedic Saṃhitā. Rudra was held in such awe and veneration that the A.B. (3-34-7) enjoins that a formula must be altered from the form in which it occurs in the R.V. in order to avoid the direct mention of the name of Rudra.

Śiva aspect of Rudra not met with in the R.V., malevolent aspect made much of.

In the R.V. the benevolent or Śiva aspect of Rudra is not clearly outlined; the malevolent aspects stand out vividly. He is invoked as 'Paśupa' 'the protector of the cattle' (R.V. 1-114-9) and sometimes described as a healer of diseases (R.V. 1-43-4) and the best of physicians (II-33-4).[28] These eulogies and invocations are the outcome of fear and not sincere love or devotion. Because he causes plagues to animals his protection is sought for averting diseases and hence he is described as the protector of cattle.

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27. 'Āre te goghnamuta pūruṣaghnam.'
28. 'Bhiṣaktamaṃ tvā bhiṣajāṃ śṛṇomi.'

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In R.V. VII-46-2 the seer appeals to Rudra not to afflict children with diseases ; he is requested to bestow immunity from illness on the villagers (1-114-1).[29] From these verses it is crystal clear that Rgvedic Aryans believed god Rudra to be the generator of diseases and afflictions. As he was deemed to be the cause of diseases men propitiated him when they recovered from or were immune from diseases and attributed the recovery or immunity to the healing power of Rudra. Thus evolved the conception of 'Physician' attributed to the deity. Thus in the days of the R.K. Saṃhitā people prayed to Rudra seeking his protection and grace more out of fear than of sincere devotion. One verse of the R.V. reads as follows—'O Rudra, do not, out of wrath, injure our children and progeny, our people, our cows and horses, houses, and pray, do not kill our men. We invoke thee with offerings.'[30] Among the many derivations of the term 'Rudra' the current one is 'he who makes every one cry,' i.e., causes affliction to everyone ('Rodayati sarvān iti Rudraḥ'). In the A.V. also (11-2-22, 6 ; 4-90) Rudra is described as a deity that attacks people with fever, cough, poison etc. According to the A.V. he possesses wide-mouthed howling dogs.

Malevolent aspect of Rudra.

The concept of Rudra underwent further evolution in the Yajurveda. The deity appears in a much more developed form in the Śatarudriya hymns contained in the sixteenth chapter of the V.S. The apparently contradictory aspects of Rudra, viz, malevolent and benevolent are clearly stated, the one being distinguished from the other. The deity represents both the darker powers and the benign powers of

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29. 'Viśvaṃ puṣṭaṃ grāme asminnanāturam.'

30. 1-114-8—'Mā na stoke tanaye mā na āyau mā no goṣu mā no aśveṣu rīriṣaḥ. Vīrān mā no Rudra bhāmito vadhīrhaviṣmantaḥ sadamit tvā havāmahe.'

This verse also occurs verbatim in the V.S. 16-16.

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nature. His benignant form is termed 'Śivātanūḥ' and 'Aghorā' 'non-terrific'[31] as opposed to his malignant form called Ghora, Bhīma, Ugra etc., meaning terrific and awe-inspiring. Representing the evil forces of nature Rudra is described as living far away from human habitation as the lord of forests and protector of hunters, highway robbers, night-rangers, thieves, pilferers, cheats, pickpockets, outcasts, etc. He is eulogised as the presiding deity of thieves, of swordsmen, archers and robbers armed with swords.[32] He is the protector of swindlers and house-breakers who roam about in the mountains putting on turbans.[33] The terms stena, stāyu, Muṣānam, Taskara, Kuluñca, etc., mean different types of thieves and theft such as ordinary theft, pilfering, house-breaking, cutthroat, pickpocket, swindler etc. Rudra is also the lord of soldiers, army and commander-in-chief. All sorts of fierce weapons and sharp missiles are associated with him. He holds bow, arrows, thunderbolt and various deadly weapons. He himself is also described as senāpati and senānī, commander-in-chief. The constant epithet of Rudra as saṃhatṛ or destroyer of the universe at the time of dissolution traces its origin in this Śatarudrīya chapter of the V.S. He is called 'Bhavasya hetiḥ' 'the destroyer of the universe in 16-18. The seer prays to the deity to take pity on him and 'not to kill his father and mother, and not to injure the persons dear to him,'[34] not to kill the people and other created beings of the world.'[35]

Rudra in the Y.Y. comprises both malevolent and benevolent aspects; the Rudra aspects and Śiva aspects.

He is the patron deity of both Aryans and non-Aryans.

He is the protector of criminals and outcasts.

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31. 16-2—'Yā te Rudra śivā tanūraghorā'pāpakāśinī.'

32. 16-21—'Namo vañcate parivañcate stāyūnāṃ pataye namo
Namo niṣaṅgina iṣudhimate taskarāṇāṃ pataye namo
namaḥ sṛkāyibhyo jighāṃsadbhyo muṣṇatāṃ pataye namo
Namo'simadbhyo naktaṃcaratbhyo vikṛntānāṃ pataye namaḥ.'

33. 16-22—'Nama uṣṇīṣine giricarāya kulūñcānāṃ pataye namaḥ.'

34. 16-15—'Mā no vadhīḥ pitaraṃ mota mātaraṃ mā naḥ priyāstanvo Rudra rīriṣaḥ.'

35. 16-3—'Mā hiṃsīḥ puruṣaṃ jagat.'

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In his benignant aspect he appears in this chapter of the V.S. as the healer, the lord of medicinal herbs and is termed 'the principal heavenly physician.'[36] Prayer is offered to him to confer healthy minds in all men and to free them from the deadly disease tuberculosis (16-4). The same Rudra who is saluted as the protector of night-rangers, hobgoblins, cutthroats, thieves, non-Aryan tribes and outcasts in his malevolent aspect is also eulogised as the all-powerful deity who can kill 'the venomous serpents and female night-rangers, i.e., female demons (16-5)'. Being the lord of fields and plains, he is also the lord of cattle (Paśūnāṃ patiḥ) that graze about in those fields. In the post-Vedic age 'Paśupati' became a special appellation of this god. The P.B. also (14-9-12 ; 23-13-2) describes him as a hunter and lord of wild cattle. Not only the term 'Paśupati', but also such epithets which accompany the description and conception of Rudra or Śiva in the Puranas such as Kapardin, Śitikantha, Nīlagrīva, Gaṇapati, Bhava, Śarva, Pinākin etc., occur in this chapter of the V.S.[37] The epithet 'Tryamvaka' also occurs in the V.S. (3-60), 'Tryamvakaṃ yajāmahe'. It is surprising to note that even the epithets of Kṛttivāsa (Kṛttiṃ vasānaḥ), 'putting on the garment of hide' (16-51) and of Giriśaya, 'residing in the mountain' (16-29) are met with in the Śatarudrīya hymn. The deity is also invoked as the lord of directions (Diśāṃ patiḥ), lord of paths (Pathināṃ patiḥ), lord of nourishment (Puṣṭānāṃ patiḥ), lord of food (Annānāṃ patiḥ), lord of fields (Kṣetrāṇāṃ patiḥ), lord of trees (Vṛkṣāṇāṃ patiḥ), lord of herbs (Oṣadhīnāṃ patiḥ), lord of animals (Satvānāṃ patiḥ), of horses (Aśvapatiḥ), lord of commoners (Gaṇapatiḥ), lord of the assembly (Sabhāpatiḥ), of talented people (Gṛtsapatiḥ), of hunters (Śva-patiḥ) etc. In the T.S. also (4-5-1-3) the god is described as haunting the hills and is closely related to the trees on which he deposits his weapons.

Benignant or Siva aspects of Rudra

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36. 16-5—'Prathamo daivyo bhiṣak.'

37. (i) 16-28—'Namo Bhavāya ca Rudrāya ca namaḥ śarvāya ca paśupataye ca, namo Nīlagrīvāya ca śitikanṭhāya ca.'

(ii) 16-10—'Vijyaṃ dhanuḥ kapardino viśalyo vāṇavān.'

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In his benignant aspect the god is also described in the V.S. as the presiding deity of councillors and merchants.[38] Thus he inspires the Mantrins or councillors of the king with good counsel and speeds on the merchants for economic welfare of the country.

The deity reveals himself in both higher classes and low castes, mixed castes and outcasts.

Again, Rudra reveals himself not only in the higher castes but also in those low castes who are placed in the lowest rung of the social hierarchy. The Śatarudrīya chapter of the V.S. merits special importance for this fact as well. Salutation is offered to Rudra who reveals himself in 'the carpenters, chariotwrights, potters, blacksmiths, Niṣādas, Puñji-ṣṭhas or bird-catchers, śvanis or those who roam about with dogs, and Mṛgayus or hunters.[39] Not to speak of human beings he reveals himself also in the vegetable and animal kingdoms such as trees, medicinal herbs, shrub, dogs, etc. He is the lord of both men and beasts and the term Paśu in Paśupati includes both. He assumes the form of both dogs and masters of dogs.[40]

Different groups of Rudras inhabiting different regions.

The name Rudra has been generalised and many Rudras are spoken of. The seer prays to those groups of Rudras to stay far away from him so as not to harm him in verses 54 to 63 of the Śatarudrīya hymn. One central Rudra manifests himself in many groups of Rudras, having different designations according to their regions and functions. Thus there are terrestrial Rudras, Rudras of the welkin region and those of the celestial sphere. Those inhabiting the welkin region are connected with thunder and lightning and those of the celestial abode are termed 'Nīla-

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38. 16-19—'Namo mantriṇe vāṇijāya.'

39. 16-27—'Namastakṣabhyo rathakārebhyaśca vo namaḥ, namaḥ Kulālebhyaḥ karmārebhyaśca vo namo, namo . Niṣādebhyaḥ Puñjiṣṭhebhyaśca vo namo, namaḥ śvanibhyo mṛgayubhyaśca vo namaḥ.'

40. 16-28—'Namaḥ śvabhyaḥ śvapatibhyaśca vo namaḥ.'

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grīva', 'Śitikaṇṭha' etc. One batch of Rudras also occupies the nether world or the Pātāla region and some Rudras reside in the trees and herbs.

The Rudras are also called Gaṇas and Gaṇapatis, leaders of tribes or groups of people having different callings such as potters, blacksmiths etc., described above. The workmen of handicraft and also the forest tribe of Niṣādas are brought into close connection with Rudra. Perhaps the followers of these multifarious crafts and the non-Aryan tribes mentioned along with outcasts and low castes used to worship Rudra as their patron god or presiding deity in some form or other.

In the Ṛgveda Rudra represents the 'thunder' aspect of the natural phenomena and as such he is classed with the deities of the welkin region like Vāyu, Marut etc. In the Śukla Yajurveda or V.S. Rudra has been identified with the Sungod Sūrya in clear and unmistakable terms in several verses of the Śatarudrīya hymn. Pointing at the sun with his finger the sage sings the glory of Rudra in the shape of the Sungod in the following strain—'By our supplication we shall avert the wrath of Rudra who is shining in the yonder sky in the shape of the sun, crimson and tawny in colour, the auspicious deity whose thousand rays have pervaded all the directions.'[41] Uvata and Mahīdhara both the commentators while interpreting this verse remark—'Here Rudra is eulogised in the form of the sun.'[42] They hold that the crimson hue refers to both the rising and the setting sun. In the verse following the above-quoted one (16-6) the identification of Rudra and Āditya is stated very poetically—'The cowherd boys and the village maidens who come to the tank for fetching water witness Rudra (in the form of the setting sun) who goes down the firmament tinged all over with the crimson hue but bluish at the neck. Thus seen

Rudra identified with the sun in the V.S.

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41. 16-6—'Asau yastāmro aruṇa uta babhruḥ sumaṅgalaḥ ye cainaṃ Rudrā abhito dikṣu śritāḥ sahasraśo'vaivāṃ heḍa īmahe.'

42. 'Ādityarūpeṇātra Rudraḥ stūyate.'

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the deity bestows happiness on us.'[43] The setting sun is identified with Rudra in this verse with a poetic gusto. Though the setting sun looks vermilion red yet a bluish hue is perceptible near the centre of its disc; hence it is termed Nīlagrīva or Nīlakaṇṭha 'Blue-necked'. The cowherd boys looking at the setting sun know it is time to lead the cattle back to the fold and the village maidens come to the tank or river at dusk to fetch water (udahāryaḥ) and with joy and wonder do they look at the glory and the majesty of the setting sun that wildly flaunts the colour-streamers across the earth and heaven turning the western sky into a veritable frenzy of red and vermilion. One of the many synonyms of Rudra is 'Kapardin' which means 'one possessing matted locks'; commentators taxing their ingenuity have thrown in a suggestion that this appellation of Rudra traces its origin in his identification with the sun; the thousand pencils of rays of the sun clearly visible at the time of rising and setting have been conceived as so many matted locks of the deity. This identification of Rudra as also of other gods with Sūrya goes to prove the truth of Kātyāyana's statement in Sarvānukramaṇī—'In fact, one deity is eulogised in the Vedas, he is the great Āditya or Sun-god.'[44] Yāska, the reputed author of Nirukta, one of the six Vedāngas i.e., accessories to the Vedic study, observes—'Other gods are but the limbs of one (central) Godhead.'[45] One Supreme power which is the source of all creation manifests itself through the different gods who represent different aspects of the Absolute.

Poetic imagery of Rudra in the form of sun in the V.S.

All gods as the different expressions of the sun.

Gods are different manifestations of the Supreme Spirit.

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43. 16-7—'Asau yo'vasarpati nīlagrīvo vilohitaḥ,
Utainaṃ gopā adṛśrannadṛ śrannudahāryaḥ,
sa dṛṣṭo mṛḍayāti naḥ.'

44. 'Ekaiva devatā vede stūyate, Āditya iti,'

45. 7-4—'Ekasyātmanaḥ anye devāḥ pratyaṅgāni bhavanti.'

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Both in the R.V. and the V.S. Rudra is also described and propitiated as the Supreme Godhead who is the fountainhead of all energy, all life and the whole creation.

Rudra eulogised as the Supreme Godhead in the R.V. and V.S.

Even in the R.V. Rudra is raised to supreme power. 'By his power he perceives all earthly beings and by his universal sovereignty or imperial suzerainty he perceives all divine beings.'[46] He moves at once far and near; he is boundless and is free from mortal ailments and limitations. The V.S. also describes and praises the deity in similar strain. Rudra is described as the lord of the universe 'Jagatāṃ patiḥ' (16-18), 'he who assumes all forms 'Viśvarūpebhyaḥ' (16-25), 'the all-powerful Supreme God' 'Bhagavān' (16-52, 53), 'Īśāna' (16-53) etc.

In the first portion of the Śatarudrīya hymn Rudra is depicted as an awe-inspiring terrific deity as the term 'Rudra' literally signifies. It is only towards the last portion of the said hymn that the deity assumes the form of Śiva and is described as a benign deity catering to the welfare of worshippers and humanity at large. In his benignant aspect he is invoked as Śambhava, Mayobhava, Śankara, Mayaskara, Śiva and Śivatara. The sixteenth chapter of the V.S. contains sixty-six verses in all and it is only in

The malevolent and benevolent appellations shake hand in the V.S.

the forty-first verse that the benignant appellations are attached to the deity which reads as follows :—'Salutation to him who is Śambhava and Mayobhava; salutation to him who is Śankara and Mayaskara; salutation to him who is Śiva and Śivatara.'[47] All these epithets Śambhava, Mayobhava, Śankara, Mayaskara, Śiva etc., mean the same thing, viz,—the good, the auspicious, benign, well-meaning. Thus Rudra the terrific ulti-

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46. 7-46-2—'Sa hi kṣayena kṣamyasya janmanaḥs āmrājyena divyasya cetati.' (R.V.)

47. 'Namaḥ Śambhavāya ca Mayobhavāya ca namaḥ Śankarāya ca Mayaskarāya ca, namaḥ Śivāya ca Śivatarāya ca.'

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mately becomes Śiva the benign. Earlier in the same chapter of the V.S. he has been described as 'Ghora', 'Ghoratara', i.e. fierce, more fierce ; now he is called Śiva, Śivatara, the benign, more benign. He is both 'Yāmya' and 'Kṣemya', i.e. he causes the harrowings of the hell and the contentment of the balanced mind (16-33) as well. Thus in the evolution of the concept of Rudra we find two diametrically opposite ideas developing side by side like thesis and antithesis—one bespeaking the benignant and the other the malignant aspect. From the above discussion it is abundantly clear that Rudra is at once the presiding deity of soldiers, merchants, landowners, peasants, forests, trees, herbs, sacrificers, physicians and also of thieves, robbers, marauders, gangsters, hunters, night-rangers, highwaymen, cutthroats, swindlers. He is the protector not only of Aryans but also of non-Aryan tribes such as Niṣādas, Puñjiṣṭhas, Śvanis, and outcasts. He is the protector not only of higher castes but also of the lowest strata of the society ; rather, He is specially the patron deity of persons who go down in the estimation of the higher castes such as potters, blacksmiths, bird-catchers, gypsies going about with dogs, gamblers, hunters, meat-sellers and the like. Thus the two contradictory aspects of the society like two watertight compartments shutting out each other represent two divergent aspects of the deity, viz, the Rudra and the Śiva aspects like thesis and antithesis of the dialectic of social fabric. These two apparently contradictory characteristics of Rudra are transcended in his all-compassing comprehensive form which is the solution of all contradictions, the great synthesis encompassing both the thesis and the antithesis of the body politic. In this all-comprehensive aspect Rudra and Śiva join hands and merge into one Supreme deity rising above all contradictions and conflicts. In this supreme synthetic aspect Rudra is described and invoked as the lord of all creation, Lord of all creatures, the source of all life and energy, the deity who manifests himself in diverse forms and whose essence permeates the whole creation through

The thesis, antithesis and synthesis in the evolution of the concept of Rudra.

All comprehensive characteristics of Rudra who ultimately becomes Śiva in the Y.V. and S.B.

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and through. Both the mobile and the immobile, the sentient and the insentient, the animal and the vegetable kingdom are pervaded by him. In this aspect Rudra or Śiva is the Supreme Godhead where all contradictions are transcended, all differences dissolved, all personal traits merged in the Absolute. In the earlier portion Rudra has been described as a personal deity who possesses blue neck, matted locks, Pināka bow, who holds various deadly missiles and puts on a hide and a holy thread (16-17, 'Upavītine') as well. But in the latter portion of the chapter concerned these personal characteristics are lost in his almost impersonal character. This description of Rudra evolving through a dialectical process and ultimately converging in a great synthesis which solves the contradiction of thesis and antithesis embodies the message of the Upaniṣads—the great Vedantic truth that every object of creation, however trivial it may be, is pervaded by the essence of the Supreme Self. 'Sarvaṃ Khalvidaṃ Brahma' i.e. all created beings are Brahman, i.e., Supreme Godhead. Every object whether human or non-human, sentient or insentient is a spark of the divine and as such no man, no object should be slighted or underrated. All human beings ranging from the lowest rung to the highest rank of the social hierarchy are indispensable to the functioning of the social organism. Everyone is an integral part of the society which is an organic whole. Every member of the human family or animal world or vegetable kingdom is but a visible manifestation of the invisible spirit, the Supreme Godhead who has assumed all these diverse names and forms. This truth has been adumbrated in such Saṃhitā passages as 'This one has become all'[48], and such Upaniṣadic sayings as 'I shall become many,'[49] 'His one form has assumed all these forms.'[50]

The great synthesis bespeaks a Vedantic truth.

The implications of this synthesis.

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48. R.V. 'Ekaṃ vai idaṃ vibabhūva sarvam.'
49. 'Eko'haṃ bahu syām.'
50. K.U. 2-2-9, 10, B.U. 2-5-19, 'Rūpaṃ rūpaṃ pratirūpaṃ babhūva.'

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The all-comprehensive nature of Rudra may be explained from another angle of vision which throws a flood of light on the evolution of the Vedic pantheon. In the Śatarudrīya hymn Rudra has been described as 'Gaṇapati' and 'Senānī' meaning 'the lord of the people' and 'Commander-in-chief' respectively. In the post-Vedic mythology this Gaṇapati-aspect disintegrated from the person of Rudra and gave rise to the conception and the creation of a new deity called Gaṇapati or Gaṇeśa. Again, the characteristic of Senānī disintegrated and gave birth to the conception of the deity termed Kārtikeya who was the commander-in-chief of the gods. We know, Ganeśa and Kārtikeya became sons of Śiva in the Purāṇas but in the Vedic age these two sons were merged in the person of the father Rudra in the form of epithets. Moreover goddess Ambikā who became the divine consort of Śiva in the post-Saṃhitā age is described as Rudra's sister (svasā) in the V. S. (3-5), T. B. and the S. B. 'Ambikā is verily Rudra's sister.'[51] The T. B. connects the season of autumn (śarat) with Ambikā.[52]. These passages go to prove that Ambikā was Rudra's sister in the Vedic age. The observation of the T. B. mentioned above proves that Ambikā was connected with autumn. In the post-Vedic age Ambikā became the consort of Rudra and she was worshipped in the autumn. Again, the conveyance of Rudra is described as Ākhu i.e., the mouse in the S. B. and T. B.[53] whereas in the later age the mouse became the conveyance of Ganeśa, the son of Śiva.

The all-comprehensive nature viewed from another angle of vision.

Ganeśa and Kārtikeya merged in the person of Rudra in the form of epithets.

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51. 2-6-2-9—'Amvikā vai nāmāsya Rudrasya svasā.' (S.B.)

52. 1-6-10—'Śarad va asya (Rudrasya) Amvikā svasā.'

53. S.B. 2-6-2-10—T.B. 1-6-10-2,—'Ākhuste (Rudrasya) Paśuḥ.'

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Influence of Non-Aryan Religion and Primitive Faith :

A word of caution is necessary before launching on the discussion of this topic. Both history and common sense tell us that whenever a nation or a race comes in close contact with another nation or race by way of victory, commerce or migration, naturally there takes place reciprocation of feelings and ideas ; they influence each other. But it is very difficult to pass any judgment or correctly assess the influences and borrowings. Slater in his 'The Dravidian Element in Indian Culture' and C. F. Oldham in his 'The Sun and the Serpent' have sung the glory of the Dravidian Culture with much fanfare and have made a futile attempt to prove the influence of that culture on the Vedic religion without adducing concrete illustrations as proofs thereof. Their statements are mostly based on imagination lacking cogency of reason. Such statements must be built up on the bedrock of facts. Rightly does Keith remark on the fantastic contentions of Slater to prove the superiority of the Dravidian culture, 'Unfortunately he (Slater) adduces no evidence for these assertions beyond the unscientific opinions of Mr. C. F. Oldham, and a couple of even less plausible conjectures, and it is sufficient to observe that there is nothing whatever to induce us to believe in the superiority of the culture of the Dravidians or the Muṇḍā-speaking tribes, and that on the contrary the evidence points rather in the opposite direction.'[1] Scholars like Elliot Smith, etc., do not look eye to eye with Slater and Oldham as they deny originality to the Dravidian Culture which, in their opinion, migrated from Mesopotamia and Egypt in the third millennium B.C. The views of Smith and his camp are also mainly speculative and should be taken with a grain of salt. It is next to impossibility to make a categorical assertion regarding any event of hoary antiquity from which we are separated by a long

A word of caution regarding this topic.

Contention of Slater and Oldham, and Keith's rejoinder.

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1. The Religion and Philosophy of the Veda and Upanisads. Appendix G. page 630.

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passage of time covering many centuries or millenniums. Tentative statements may be made but no categorical or dogmatic assertions. The wisest course of action in such matters that baffle our ingenuity or elude verification by facts has been chalked out by Keith. He cautions the scholars in the following vein :—'Assuming, however, the validity of the doctrine (that the Dravidian culture influenced the Vedic culture), there remains the question whether the invaders were essentially responsible for the Vedic religion and philosophy, imposing a superior culture on inferior races, or whether the process as regards culture was reversed ; instances of analogical cases can be easily adduced. Here again, however, we must remember that we have no satisfactory evidence of the relative numbers of the invaders and the earlier settlers ; we are left in this matter wholly to conjecture. ....On the other hand, we must admit when we come to definite attempts to prove Dravidian influence on Vedic religion or philosophy we are in the region of conjecture. The absence of any really early Dravidian evidence as to culture deprives us of any assured knowledge of pre-Indo-European conditions such as would enable us effectively to gauge Dravidian influences on Vedic religion or philosophy. This leads to the necessity of relying on conjectures, of which many may be easily shown to have no sound foundation, or at most to be mere possibilities. We may, of course, accept such possibilities if we like, but in doing so we cease to be judicial and arrive merely at subjective judgments which have no lasting value.'[2] In this light of conjecture and subjective judgment we shall make some tentative observations in the following lines regarding the impact of certain non-Aryan practices and primitive popular faith on Vedic or Aryan religion.

Rational observation of Keith.

In our discussion on the beginnings of popular religious cults we have shown with profuse quotations how god Rudra was looked upon as a presiding deity and protector not only by the Aryans but also by the non-Aryan tribes. Different gaṇas or

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2. The Religion and Philosophy of the Veda and Upanisads. Appendix G, Pages 629, 630.

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groups of Rudras have been conceived inhabiting different regions. Rudra is the protector not only of merchants, soldiers, peasants, commanders-in-chief, higher castes but he is is also the patron deity of such non-Aryan tribes as Niṣādas, Pulindas, gypsies going about with dogs called Śvanin etc., and of criminals like thieves, pickpockets, swindlers, gangsters, cutthroats, gamblers, daredevil robbers, marauders and the like miscreants who are menace to the society. From this description of Rudra one may infer that in all probability there existed the worship of Rudra in his terrific and malevolent aspect in some form or other among the aboriginal non-Aryan tribes who submitted to the hegemony of the Aryans. The different groups of Rudra and the description of Rudra as the protector and not the destroyer of diehard criminals, outcasts, outlaws and non-Aryan tribes justify such a hypothesis. Even to-day we find the robbers and gangsters who are Hindu by religion worship either the terrific aspect of Śiva called Kāla-bhairava or his consort goddess Kālī whom they look upon as and sincerely believe to be their protector or protectress.

Probable non-Aryan influence in the

(i) Origin of Rudra cult.

Some scholars have traced the influence of the non-Aryan phallic worship in certain rituals of the Vedic sacrifice. The celebrated horse-sacrifice, the Mahāvrata etc., are illustrations in point. In the description of the horse-sacrifice we have seen that the queens have to play an important role in the rites concerned. The chief queen anoints the horse aided by other queens. When the horse is strangled to death and laid on the ground on a blanket the chief queen Mahiṣī also lies down by the side of the horse and the priest covers both the queen and the horse with a garment so that no eyes may pry on the rites performed by the queen at this stage. The queen catches hold of the genital organ of the horse and unites with it while the priest utters the verse, 'O virile male steed, ejaculate your semen'[3]. While the queen performs this rite

(ii) Horse-sacrifice.

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3. 13-5-2-2—'Aśvasya śiśnaṃ mahiṣī upasthe nidhatte vṛṣā 'vājī retodhā reto dadhātu', iti.'

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different priests indulge in ribald dialogue in bantering tone with different female characters ; the Adhvaryu converses with the maiden who accompanies the chief queen, the Brahman priest converses with the chief queen, the Udgātṛ priest with the Vāvātā, the Hotṛ with the Parivṛktā wife of the king and the Kṣattṛ with the fourth wife of the king called Pālāgalī. The details are given in the S. B. 13-5-2 and T. B. 3-9. The ribald dialogue is cryptic, bantering in vein and some non-Sanskrit rustic words have crept in. This rite performed by the chief queen rudely shocks our taste and runs counter to decorum and decency, and the light-hearted ribald slang dialogue referred to above is not in keeping with the sublime atmosphere of the sacrifice. Hence we cannot blame anyone if he finds in this practice a vestige of the phallic worship of the non-Aryans who were children of the soil.

(iii) Mahāvrata sacrifice.

In the sacrifice called Mahāvrata also a similar rite takes place. In the sessional sacrifice Gavāmayana Mahāvrata takes place on the penultimate, i.e., the 360th day. It is an old festival of the winter solstice originally, when the sun has to be strengthened. The sun is honoured with offerings. Drums are beaten on every side of the sacrificial altar. The Rgvedic priest Hotṛ sits on a swing and is swung to and fro, to represent the orbit of the sun in the celestial region. Maidens carrying pitchers full of water dance round the fire while the sound of drums keeps time with their tripping movement. As a part of the ceremony a conversation takes place in abusive indecent language bespeaking fertilisation between a student and a hetaira. This abusive dialogue is followed by actual sexual intercourse between the student and the courtesan. As in the case of the particular rite of the horse-sacrifice here also an influence of the non-Aryan religion may be traced.

(iv) Gosava sacrifice.

The J. B. (2-113) gives the details of a sacrifice called Gosava in which the performer complements the ox for fertilising all of its female relations and tries to imitate the breeding bull's mode of sex life including incest with mother, sister and other female relatives. King Janaka of Videha did not perform this rite as he could

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not approve of these illicit and highly objectionable incestuous acts whereas the Śibi King performed the rite and observed that such a ritual should be performed in one's old age when those illicit intercourses might be excusable. This rite outrages all sense of decency and fundamental principles of civilised society. It seems the objectionable rites were influenced by some popular religion of the aboriginal people or some primitive faith.

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BOOK III

CHAPTER VI.

Sacraments :

By sacraments or saṃskāras are meant the purificatory domestic rites that cover the whole period of a man's life from birth to death comprising conception, birth, tonsure, investiture with the holy thread, studentship, marriage, funeral ceremony etc., termed Garbhādhān,a, Jātakarma, Cūḍākarana, Upanayana, Brahmacarya, vivāha, śmaśāna-kṛtya or Mṛtadehasaṃskāra respectively. The details of these ceremonies are found in the Gṛhyasūtras which deal with domestic (gṛhya) rites just as Śrautasūtras deal with sacrificial rites in aphoristic form. The details of these domestic rites i.e., rites governing the life of a householder are not to be found in the Brs. The Brs. casually make certain observations regarding some of these rites such as Upanayana, studentship, funeral ceremony etc., It is only in the G. B. that we come across details of certain domestic rites, e.g., the details, the rules and regulations, mandates and taboos of student life are met with in this Br. Judged by its contents and language it is admitted on all hands that the G. B. is not contemporaneous with the other Brs., but is a work of a later age. Some scholars have even called it post-Vedic. It is contemporaneous with the Gṛhyasūtras. Details are found in the S. B. of two important sacraments, viz, studentship and funeral ceremony. In the following lines we shall attempt to summarise the observations of the Brs. on these sacraments. As the Gṛhyasūtras fall outside the range of our work we shall not enumerate the details of these sacraments which are not met with in the Brs. concerned.

Sacraments enumerated.

All the sacraments are not met with in the Brs.

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(1) **Natal rites or Birth ceremonies :**

Before the delivery of the child the room is anointed against inroads of Rakṣasas or hobgoblins. A Brahmin loosens all the knots in the house ; water and Tūryantī plant are placed before the mother. Following the birth of the child some ceremonies are immediately performed for the long life and intellectual uplift of the new-born child. The father breathes thrice upon the child and offers it to partake of a mixture of butter, honey, milk etc. The child is fed with a small gold rod. According to the S. B. five Brāhmins should breathe upon the baby before the umbilical cord is severed. "In the case of a new-born child whose navel string has not been severed let him (the father) say to five brahmins 'Breathe over him in this way'."[1] The father makes the five Brahmins stand around the child in respective quarters and breathe upon the baby one after another. 'In case Brahmins are not available the father himself should breathe over the baby'.[2]. Hence according to the S. B. the father should perform this act only if the Brahmins are not available as their substitute. A fire is lit and the child is smoked. A prayer is recited in the ear of the baby asking the gods savitṛ or Mitra and Varuṇa to grant it intelligence. A water jug is placed on the head of the mother and she is commended to the protection of its water.

Natal rites.

The Nāmakaraṇa or naming ceremony takes place either on the tenth or the twelfth day or at the termination of a year from the date of birth. The father names the baby in consultation with his domestic priest or Brāhmins in general.

(2) **Cūḍākarana ;**

The ceremony of tonsure known as Cūḍākarana takes place in the third, fifth and seventh year for a Brāhmaṇa, Kṣatriya and a Vaiśya child respectively. The hair grown on the head of

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1. 11-8-3-6—'Putraṃ jātamakṛttanābhiṃ pañcabrāhmanān brūyādityenamanuprāṇiteti.'

2. 11-8-3-6—'Yadi u tānna vindedapi svayamevānuparikrāmamanuprāṇyāt.'

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child since delivery is deemed impure and is shaven in a particular fashion according to family tradition ; a tuft of hair is left out at the centre of the head called cūḍā. A verse of the R. V. reads thus—'Where the arrows fall like the heads of children shorn of hair'[3]. From this verse it is inferred that the ceremony of tonsure existed in the early Vedic age also which gained celebrity and richness of details in the later Vedic age. In the Brs. we do not find any details of this ceremony except the bare reference to children shorn of their hair. After wetting the child's hair bunches of Darbha grass are placed on his head. A razor is made of the wood of holy fig tree and with that razor the father touches the hair first on the right side, then the back and lastly the left side. Following this the barber does the actual shaving in the same manner. The shaven hair is dumped in cowdung along with the Darbha bunch. When the barber proceeds to shave the child the priest utters a Vedic verse appealing to the razor not to injure the child ; 'Svadhite, mainaṃ hiṃsīḥ' 'O razor' do not hurt the child'.

Tonsure ceremony.

(3) **Upanayana and studentship :**

Investiture with the holy thread and initiation into Sāvitrī hymn takes place in the eighth year from the time of conception in the case of a Brahmin boy, in the eleventh year for a Kṣatriya boy and twelfth year for a boy of the Vaiśya community. The maximum age limit for this important sacrament is fixed up as the sixteenth, twenty-second and twenty-fourth years for boys of Brahmin, Kṣatriya and Vaiśya family respectively. Beyond this limit a boy forfeits his right to investiture and initiation and as a result the sacred lore remains a sealed book to him and he has no access to sacrifice. Different garments, girdles and staves are prescribed for different castes. A garment made of the hide of black antelope (ajina) is meant for a Brāhmaṇa, that of a Ruru

Investiture with the holy thread and studentship.

3. 6-35-17—'Yatra-vāṇāḥ sampatanti kumārā viśikhā iva.'

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deer is prescribed for a Kṣatriya and for a Vaiśya is prescribed the hide of a sheep or a goat. The girdle and holy thread of a Brahmin boy should be made of Muñjā and cotton, respectively, those of a Kṣatriya should be made of Murbā (girdle) and hemp (holy thread) and in case of a Vaiśya they should be made of hemp (girdle) and wool of the sheep (holy thread). The staff of the Brahmin is made of Palāśa or Vilva wood, that of a Kṣatriya of banyan or Acacia Catechu (khadira) wood and in case of a Vaiśya of Pilu or holy fig tree. The preceptor makes the pupil stand on a slab of stone to secure firmness ; he puts on his new garment made of silk or wool or thread as stated above, his girdle (mekhalā), the sacred thread and lastly the animal hide. Other rites follow the details of which are not given in the Brs. but are met with in the Gṛhyasūtras and Smṛti texts. The period of student life is termed Brahmacarya and is an inseparable sequel to the initiation ceremony. The preceptor in whose residential institution the initiated student resides and undergoes academic training may perform his initiation ceremony (upanayana). This was the general practice in ancient India and this is why Manu defines Ācārya as a preceptor who initiates the student with the holy thread and Sāvitrī, and imparts learning to him in his institution in the Vedic lore along with the accessories (Vedāngas) and Upaniṣads.[4] Instances of departure from this convention are also met with in the Upaniṣads where the Ācārya of the school is different from the Ācārya of the initiation ceremony. The initiation was regarded as the second birth or spiritual birth of the student where Ācārya is the father and Sāvitrī is the mother. The physical birth derived from parents is subject to death but this spiritual birth grants the student immortality and spiritual vigour. The ceremony of receiving the student, the spiritual tie between the teacher and the taught, the vows and duties of student life, the mandates and taboos (Vidhis and niṣedhas), the courses of study, both the man-making and brain-making side of ancient Indian

Definition of Ācārya.

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4. 2-140—'Upanīya tu yaḥ śiṣyaṃ vedamadhyāpayed dvijaḥ.
Sakalpaṃ sarahasyaṃ ca tamācāryaṃ pracakṣate.'

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education and the like items of student life have been thoroughly discussed under the caption 'Education' in Book I.

Be it mentioned here that in the Vedic age the women of higher three castes were also invested with the holy thread and were allowed to utter the Sāvitrī verse, to study the Vedas and to take part in the sacrifice with their husbands. This practice was in vogue since the days of ṚK Saṃhitā down to the age of the Sūtra literature. Some authors of Smṛti texts bear testimony to this ancient custom. Yama, the author of Yama-smṛti says—'The maidens were entitled to the investiture with the holy thread or Upanayana saṃskāra in the days of yore; they studied the Vedas and uttered the Sāvitrī mantra.[5] Another author of Smṛtiśāstra, Hārīta also records this self same sloka with the only variation of 'Purā Kalpe tu nārīṇām' in place of 'Kumārīṇām'. He makes the following observation also :—There are two kinds of women, viz, Brahmavādinīs and Sadyovadhūs. Amongst these the Brahmavādinīs were entitled to upanayana ; they tended the holy fire, studied the Vedas and begged alms in their own homes. The other type, viz, Sadyovadhūs were given away in marriage after a brisk ceremony of investiture with the holy thread.[6] From this memorable observation it is crystal clear that females of the Dvija or three higher castes were invested with the holy thread like the boys in Vedic India. This was a compulsory feature. Though this custom has become obsolete in the Indo-Aryan branch of the Aryan family it still persists in the Indo-Iranian branch of the Aryan family. The girls of the Pārsi or Zoroastrian community are invested with the sacred thread till to this day, i.e., they undergo the Upanayana ceremony

Women had access to Upanayana and Vedic study in the Vedic age.

The custom still prevails in the Indo-Iranian branch of the Aryan family.

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5. 'Purākalpe kumārīṇāṃ mauñjīvandhanamiṣyate.'
Adhyāpanañca vedānāṃ sāvitrīvacanaṃ tathā.'

6. 'Dvividhā vai striyo brahmavādinyaḥ sadyovadhvaśca. Tatra brahmavadinīnāmupanayanam agnīndhanaṃ vedādhyayanaṃ svagṛhe bhikṣācaryā ca ; sadyovadhūnāṃ tūpashite vivāhe kathañcit upanayanaṃ kṛtvā vivāhaḥ kāryaḥ'.

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which is termed 'Navazot' ceremony in the Zoroastrian religion. Just as Upanayana is regarded as the second birth, i.e., the spiritual birth (Dvija) of the initiate likewise the term 'Navazot' of the Avesta also means new birth. Of the two classes of females enumerated by Hārīta the Brahmavādinīs did not marry; they observed a vow of perpetual virginity like the naiṣṭhika male brahmacārins whereas the Sadyovadhūs may be compared with the Upakurvāṇa Brahmacārins who on completion of their academic career came back to their paternal home and got married. This ancient custom of Upanayana of women persisted in the age of Sūtra literature. Gobhila, the renowned author of Gobhila-gṛhyasūtra observes—"The bride-groom should catch hold of the hand of the bride who has been invested with the holy thread, and utter the vedic verse 'somo dadat Gandharvāya etc."[7] Even in the epic age stray instances of this custom are met with. In the Vanaparvan of the Mahābhārata it is recorded that a Brahmin invested Kunti, the mother of the Pāndavas with the sacred thread and taught her the Sāvitrī hymn recorded in the Atharva-Śiras of the Veda[8]. It seems the custom persisted in some parts of India even in the 7th century A. D., because Bāṇabhatta the noted author of Kādamvarī refers to a maiden 'whose person has been sanctified with the sacred thread'. ('brahmasūtreṇa pavitrīkṛtāyām'). Smṛticandrikā, Nirṇayasindhu of Kamalākara and the like authoritative works on Hindu law bear testimony to this ancient practice which became almost obsolete when Manu was compiling his code. Manu seems to be thoroughly conversant

Navazot ceremony of Zoroastrians.

The practice of the Vedic age persisted in the post-Vedic age also.

Gṛhyasūtras, Manu and other Smṛtis bear testimony to this fact.

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7. 'Prāvṛtāṃ yajñopavītinīmabhyudānayan japet somo dadad Gandharvāyeti.'

8. 305-20—'Tatastāmanavadyāṅgīṃ grāhayāmāsa sa dvijaḥ.
Mantragrāmaṃ tadā rājannatharvaśirasi śrutam.

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with this age-old custom. Observes P. V. Kane—'Manu seems to be aware of this usage as prevalent in ancient time if not his own—in the day of the Manu-smṛti, Upanayana for women had gone out of practice, though there were faint glimmerings of its performance for women in former days.'[9]

(4) Marriage :

Marriage was looked upon as a sacrament and not a mere companionate union or contract. The problem of marriage in all its aspects—the question of child marriage, Svayamvara system, prohibition of marriage between agnates and cognates, intercaste marriages of the Anuloma and Pratiloma types, indissolubility of the marriage tie, the relation between the husband and wife, the noble end of wedlock, the duties of the wife, various practices prevalent in the later Vedic age relating to married life, the question of polygamy and polyandry, the position of the wife and allied topics have been discussed under the caption 'Women and Marriage' in Book I. The paraphernalia of rituals connected with the nuptial ceremony mentioned in the various Gṛhyasūtras are not met with in the Brs.

Marriage ceremony.

Disposal of the dead :

In the Vedic age the dead bodies were either cremated or buried or thrown into water ; sometimes the bodies were also left exposed in open place ; this last custom is still prevalent amongst the followers of the Zoroastrian religion. The different processes of the disposal of the dead are mentioned in the following verse of the Atharvaveda :—

> '*Ye nikhātā ye paroptā ye dagdhā ye cojjhitāḥ,*
> *Sarvāstān Agna āvaha pitṛn haviṣe attave.*' (18-2-34)

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9. History of Dharmaśāstras Vol. I, page 295.

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'Bring thou O Agni, the fathers (manes) one and all, the buried, the cast away, those that are burnt and those exposed, to eat the sacrificial oblation. H. G. Wells in his 'Outline History of the World' observes—'The Aryans burnt the dead but their predecessors the Iberians buried their dead'. The verse of the A. V. quoted above gives the lie to Well's assertion. The said verse clearly proves that the dead bodies were either burnt or buried or thrown away in the Vedic age. Half-burnt bodies were sometimes thrown into water. We meet with passages like 'cremation ground abounding in burning sticks', 'firewood wherewith bodies are cremated,'[1] etc. The A. B. records the procedure to be followed in cremating the body of a sacrificer or yajamāna who has already placed his household fire known as Gārhapatya Agni[2]. In case the dead body of such a sacrificer could not be traced the following procedure was adopted for cremation. The imaginary body of the deceased was fashioned with 360 (three hundred and sixty) stalks of Palāśa tree of which 150 went to the fashioning of the main body i.e., the trunk, seventy to each leg and twenty-five to each thigh; the remaining twenty stalks were placed over the head. Then this substitute body was cremated after it was touched with the three sacrificial fires.[3]

Procedure of cremation in the case of a sacrificer whose body cannot be traced.

Mention is made in the S. B. of sepulchral mounds or earthen tombs raised in memory of the deceased. The whole of the S. B. 13-8-1 deals with this topic. The sepulchral mound should be erected either in the season of autumn or summer or in the month of Māgha. The shape of the tomb should be four-cornered. 'The people who are of godly character make their funeral places four-cornered whereas those who

Various types of sepulchral mounds.

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1. A.S. 4-17-4—'Citaidhamukthyam.'
2. A.S. 6-32-1
3. A.B. 6-32-1—'Yadi śarīrānī na vidyeran parṇaśaraḥ ṣaṣṭistrīṇi ca śatānyāhṛtya teṣām puruṣarūpamiva kṛtvā.....dvipañcāśe ca viṃśe corū dvipañcaviṃśe śeṣaṃ tu śirasyupari dadhyāt.'

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are of the Asura nature, the Easterners, and others make them round'[4]. As regards the choice of ground it is enjoined that 'The mound should be raised on a patch of ground inclining towards the north, for north is the region of men : he thus gives the deceased a share in the world of men ; and in that respect, indeed, the Fathers share in the world of men that they have offspring, and the deceased person's offspring will, indeed, be more prosperous'.[5]

Implications of different sepulchral mounds.

If the ground be made inclining towards the south, the offspring of the dead person will soon follow in his wake, hence the ground inclining towards the south should not be chosen. The measurement of the mound or tomb differed in the case of different castes and sexes. 'For a Kṣatriya he may make it as high as a man with upstretched arms, for a Brāhmaṇa reaching up to the mouth, for a woman up to the hips, for a Vaiśya up to the thighs, for a Śūdra up to the knee ; for suchlike is their vigour.[6]

Measurements of mounds vary according to castes and sexes.

From a passage of the S. B. viz, 13-8-3-2,[7] it is clear that on burning the dead body the calcined bones of the charred body were carefully collected and preserved in an earthen vessel. This custom of the Vedic Aryans may be compared with the practice of the ancient Greeks who preserved the bones and ashes of the dead in urns made of stone or earth.

Preservation of the bones of the dead ; similar practice in ancient Greek and Zoroastrian religion.

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4. S.B. 13-8-1-5—'Yā daivyaḥ prajāścatuḥsraktīni tāḥ śmaśānāni kurvate.....parimaṇḍālāni.'

5. S.B. 13-8-1-6—'Udīcīnapravaṇe karotyudīcī vai manuṣyānāṃ dik tadenam manuṣyaloka.....yadeṣāṃ prajā bhavati prajā hāsya śreyasī bhavati.'

6. S.B. 13-8-3-11—'Yāvān udvāhuḥ puruṣastavatkṣatriyasya kuryāt, mukhadaghnaṃ Brāhmaṇasya, upasthadaghnaṃ striyā, ūrudaghnaṃ vaiśyasyāṣṭīvaddaghnaṃ śūdrasya evaṃ vīryā hyet iti.'

7. S.B. 13-8-3-2—'Athaitannivapati. Iyaṃ vai pṛthivī pratiṣṭhāsyāmevainametat pratiṣṭhāyāṃ pratiṣṭhāpayati.'

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The practice of raising sepulchral mounds or tombs over the burning ground as memorial of the dead also obtained in ancient Persia among the Zoroastrians. The custom of throwing the dead bodies over towers of silence to be eaten up by the birds of prey observed by the present-day followers of Zoroastrians developed much later. The tombs of Cyrus, Darius, Xerxes and the like Zoroastrian monarchs of ancient Persia of name and fame go to prove that the custom of throwing the dead on towers of silence was not in vogue when those emperors ruled in Persia. The custom of preserving calcined bones in stone or earthen urns also existed in ancient Persia. Many such urns have been discovered and they were called Astodan by the Zoroastrians. The term 'Asto' is akin to Sanskrit Asthi.

Erection of tombs and preservation of bones prevailed in ancient Persia ; tower of silence was a later practice.

In the Saṃhitā literature certain practices are met with that preceded the burning of the dead. A few moments before his expiry the man was placed on the ground which is sanctified with cowdung and strewn with grass, near his sacred domestic fire. After expiry the body was washed and anointed ; the hair and beard of the dead were closely cropped and the nails pared. Following this the body was garlanded and covered with a new garment. The female members of the family burst into wild lamentation surrounding the deceased person tearing their hair and smiting their breasts and thighs. The body was carried to the crematorium either by men or on a car. The female mourners accompanied the funeral procession with their hair dishevelled. During the journey to the burning ground verses were recited speeding the departed soul on his lonely journey to meet the Fathers and Yama. Incantations were uttered to ban evil spirits so that they may not harm the spirit of the departed or stand a bar to his union with the Fathers (Pitṛs). After the burning ceremony the mourners left the crematorium, washed themselves and changed their garments. They offered libations of water for the welfare of the dead ; they passed under a yoke made of branches of a sacred tree and entering the house touch

Certain practices connected with the disposal of the dead.

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things possessing sanctifying power such as water, fire, cowdung, mustard grains and barley grains.

Five Great Daily Sacrifices :

The five great sacrifices known as Pañca-mahayajñas enunciated in the Gṛhyasūtras and the Smṛti-texts in details trace their origin in the S. B. The germ is only found in this Br. shorn of the details and rituals that gathered round the germ in the age of the Gṛhyasūtras. The five great sacrifices are enjoined to be performed daily ; they consist of the sacrifice to beings, the sacrifice to the men, the sacrifice to the Fathers, the sacrifice to the gods and the sacrifice to the Veda termed Bhūtayajña, Manuṣyayajña, Pitṛyajña, Devayajña and Brahmayajña respectively. The whole of the S. B. 11-5-6-1 is taken up with the discussion of these five great daily sacrifices. The rites connected with these sacrifices were short and simple in the age of the Brs. which grew complicated and gathered details in the later age in the Sūtra literature connected with the domestic rituals. The śrauta rituals differ greatly from the domestic ones. The simple form of the śrauta variety of these five sacrifices is evident from the enumeration in the S. B. as follows :—'There are five great sacrifices ; they indeed are great sessional sacrifices viz,—the sacrifice to beings, the sacrifice to men, the sacrifice to the Fathers, the sacrifice to the gods, and the sacrifice to the Brahman (Veda). Day by day one should offer an oblation to beings : thus he performs the sacrifice to beings. Daily should he offer from a vessel full of water ; thus he performs the sacrifice to human beings. Day by day one should offer with the words Svadhā from a vessel filled with water ; thereby he performs the sacrifice to Fathers. Day by day one should perform with the word Svāhā with a log of wood (faggot), thereby he performs the sacrifice to the gods[1].

Enumeration of the five great daily sacrifices.

The Br. texts mainly deal with the Brahmayajña or the sacrifice to the Brahman or Veda which is generally termed Svādhyāya.

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1. S.B. 11-5-6-1—'Pañcaiva mahāyajñaḥ.....tathaitaṃ devayajñaṃ samāpnoti.'

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The Brs. do not dilate on the other types of five great sacrifices. The S. B. compares every item of the Vedic study to the different parts and holy vessels of the sacrifice. 'The sacrifice to the Brahman is one's own (daily) study of the Veda. The juhu-spoon of this sacrifice is speech, upabhṛt is the mind, Dhruvā the eye, its Sruva mental vigour, truth stands for the purificatory bath and heaven is its goal ;.....an imperishable immortal world does the sacrificer (the student) gain.[2] The ṛK-verses are the milk-offerings, the Yajuṣ texts the butter oblations, the sāman chants the Soma libations and other accessory studies are offerings of honey to the gods. This topic of Svādhyāya or Vedic study has been discussed under 'Education' in Book I. The whole of S. B. 11-5-7-1 is a glowing eulogy of the study of the Veda and the results thereof.

Brahmayajña, its details.

The term Manuṣyayajña came to mean the rites of hospitality in the later age and many passages are met with in the Brs. exhorting the people to render hospitality to the guests praising the merits thereof. In the Soma sacrifice king Soma is hailed as a guest and the rites of hospitality are shown to him by the priests. These rites constitute what is known as 'Ātithyeṣṭi'. This matter has been discussed under 'Forms of Sacrifice'. The rites of hospitality mentioned in the Brs. in connection with this ceremony amply prove how hospitality was practised and praised as a noble virtue by the Vedic Aryans. The S. B. (3-4-1-2) enjoins that a great ox or a big goat should be slaughtered and the meat should be offered to a king or a Brahmin when he comes as a guest. The A. B. lays down that a guest should be fed to his fill, i.e., to say, his hunger should be fully appeased. For this reason a guest is called 'Āpīna', inflated, because his stomach swells up when he eats his fill.[3] Commenting on this text Sāyaṇa observes : "The guest becomes bloated as it were as his stomach is completely filled up. Hence it is that the term 'Āpyāyasva' should be used to welcome and entertain

Manuṣyayajña; Hospitality.

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2. S.B. 11-5-6-1—'Svādhyāyo vai brahmayajñaḥ.....akṣayyaṃ ya evaṃ vidvānaharahaḥ svādhyāyamadhīte.'

3. 1-3-6—'Yadā vātithiṃ pariveṣayitvā pīna iva vai sa tarhi bhavati.'

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a guest as the said term signifies swelling."[4] A guest should never be denied hospitality but should always be entertained no matter at what hour he comes to the house. A guest should never be repulsed in the evening in particular under any circumstance.[5] Applying this principle of courtesy and hospitality to the Agnihotra sacrifice the A. B. (5-25-5) states that the Sungod comes as a guest and stays in the house of the sacrificer in the evening ; hence if a sacrificer does not offer the evening oblations of the Agnihotra ceremony he thereby turns out the divine guest from his house in the evening which he should never do. Thus the Manuṣyayajña came to mean offering of hospitality to guests, Brahmins, beggars etc. Hospitality is regarded as one of the great virtues of a householder. Hence on the day of leaving his residential institution after graduation along with other words of profound wisdom and advice the preceptor exhorted the student to treat his father, his mother and the guests as veritable gods. This injunction was a part of the convocation address of the universities of ancient India as recorded in the T. U.[6]

In the aphoristic literature on domestic rites these five great sacrifices underwent reorientation and took new shape as stated in the following lines. The Devayajña consists in offering oblations to the gods in the fire morning and evening, when the meal is ready. The offerings to beings called Bhūtayajña or Bhūtabali consists of various offerings placed on the ground for all sorts of beings. According to the Gobhilagṛhyasūtra (1-3-16), the offerings to beings are to be made in the following manner ; the first offering is meant for mother earth, the second for the god of wind, the third for the All-gods (Viśve-devāḥ), the fourth for Prajāpati ; the fifth is offered in the water container or big pitcher of water called 'Manikā' for the god of waters, the sixth at the middle posts for herbs, plants and trees, the seventh is offered at the entrance door of the house for the ether and the eighth in the bed for the

Bhūtayajña.

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4. 'Atithirāpīna ivodarapurtyā vṛddhiṃ prāpta bhavatyeva ; tasmād vṛddhivācakā-pyāyasveti śabdaḥ atithilakṣakah.'

5. A.B. 5-25-5—'Na sāyamatithiruparudhyaḥ.'

6. 1-11-2—'Mātṛdevo bhava. Pitṛdevo bhava. Atithidevo bhava.'

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god of love (kāma) whereas the last oblation is offered in the dustbin for the hobgoblins and evil spirits. Some more names of evil spirits follow including various serpents. The third great sacrifice viz, the sacrifice to the Fathers consists in offering the the rest of the oblation sprinkled with water to the Fathers. The fourth, the Brahmayajña, as in the later Vedic age, means recitation of some part of the Veda. The fifth called Manuṣyayajña is entertainment of guests, Brahmins and beggars.

Four Orders Of Life :

Human life has been divided into four orders or four Āśramas in Hindu scripture. These four orders go by the technical name of Caturāśrama. Student life, domestic life, retirement from domestic life into the forest and the life of a recluse go to constitute the four orders known as Brahmacarya, Gārhasthya, Vānaprastha and Sannyāsa or Bhikṣu respectively. The period of student life as we have seen is called Brahmacarya. After the Upanayana ceremony a boy had to live twelve years in the residential institution of the preceptor where he received both brain-making and man-making education. This period is called Brahmacarya due to the moral codes, the discipline of thought, speech and conduct, absolute continence and allied training the student has to undergo during this period. The problem of student life has been thoroughly discussed under 'Education' in Book I and we need not repeat the discussion here. On completion of his academic career the student takes the last purificatory bath (snāna) in the residential institution and is called a Snātaka which is equivalent to graduation. Then he returns to his paternal home and gets married or enters into the second order of life termed Gārhasthya. His coming back to the paternal home is technically known as Samāvartana. On the day of his leaving the institution the preceptor addresses him words of wisdom and advice for his practical guidance in life so that he may be an ideal member of the society. The address of the preceptor on the day of parting is like a convocation address. This parting message which can never be overestimated and should

Four orders of life enumerated.

The First order—Brahmacarya.

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be the watchword of student life is recorded in the Taittirīya Upaniṣad. Hence it is that convocation address is translated as Samāvartana-utsaba. There are some pupils who do not come back to their paternal home. Charged with a spirit of renunciation and service they remain in the preceptor's house for good. They are called Naiṣṭhika Brahmacārins whereas the former class is termed Upakurvāṇa as they are to pay a fee (dakṣiṇā) to the teacher on the day of parting. The fee helps the teacher (Upakaroti), hence the said designation. The Upakurvāṇa snātakas bring along with them a burning stick picked up from the sacrificial holy firepit of the preceptor. With that fire culled from the preceptor's fire they generate their Gārhapatya fire which is preserved in the fire sanctuary. This placing of the Gārhapatya fire is known as Agnyādhāna ceremony and a man who performs this rite is called an Āhitāgni i.e., one who has placed or established his domestic fire. Throughout his life whenever he will perform any sacrifice the fire will have to be culled from this fire and the offerings of his own marriage ceremony will be made in this fire. When he will expire his body will be burnt in the crematorium culling fire from his domestic fire. After his demise his Gārhapatya fire may be extinguished. From marriage starts the second order of life, the life of a householder. Crossing the age of fifty a man is to retire to the forest with his wife leaving his house and worldly belongings to his children. This forest life is called Vānaprastha i.e., retirement (prasthāna) into the forest (vana). He is enjoined to lead a rigorous life in the forest. From Vānaprastha he enters into the fourth and last order of life called Bhikṣu or Paribrājaka or Sannyāsa, a life of complete renunciation, a 'God-intoxicated life' where he is to leave behind his wife also and lead a life of astute austerity, complete resignation to God, a life of reflection, renunciation and perfect self-control. The Naiṣṭhika students who do not come back to their paternal home but remain permanent celibates are allowed to adopt the fourth order of life, sannyāsa, the life of an anchorite from the stage of Brahmacarya. Hence, for them two orders alone exist—Brahmacarya and sannyāsa.

Second order—Gārhasthya.

Third order—Vānaprastha.

Fourth order—ascetic life.

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In the Saṃhitā and the Brs. we do not find explicit mention of the third and fourth orders, viz,—forest life and the life of a recluse. The remaining two orders, viz, studentship or brahmacarya and the domestic life, gārhasthya have been mentioned in clear terms. The details of the first order or the period of student life are met with in two of the Brs. in particular, the S. B. and the G. B. Our findings regarding these details have been recorded under 'Education' in Book I. Similarly the references of the Brs. to marriage and conjugal life relating to the second order will be met with under the caption 'Woman and Marriage' in Book I.

Brs. only hint at and do not explicitly mention the third and fourth orders of life.

Though the third and the fourth orders of life are not explicitly stated in the Brs. there are stray passages from which one may infer the stage of inception of those two āśramas. In the A. B. in the famous story of Śunaḥśepa sage Nārada thus stresses the importance of having a son while indulging in a glowing eulogy of male progeny—'What good will you derive from filth (mala), hide of black antelope (ajina), beards (śmaśru) and penance (tapaḥ) ? O Brahmins ! you should long for the birth of a son ; the son is the highest heaven that is beyond censure'.[1] The four terms used in this couplet, viz, mala (filth), ajina (skin of the black antelope), śmaśru (beards) and tapaḥ (penance) have been taken by the commentator Sāyaṇācārya and all Vedic scholars of the east and the west to allude to the four orders of life—domestic life, studentship, forest life and the hermit life respectively. The order is here a bit changed—domestic life being placed first and student life second in order of succession. The life of a householder is termed 'mala' because it is not clean in many respects compared to the ideals of the other three orders of life. There are many imperfections and impurities in this order. A student or brahmacārin has to put on the garment made of the skin of black antelope which is called 'ajina' ; hence the term 'ajina' clearly refers to that order of life. In the third order of life a man is not allowed to shave or crop his beards ; hence the term śmaśru (beards) signify the third order, and tapaḥ or

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7-33-1—'Kiṃ nu khalu malam kimajinam kimu śmaśrūṇi kiṃ tapaḥ.'
Putraṃ Brahamaṇi icchadhvaṃ sa vai lokaḥ avadāvadaḥ.'

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penance evidently bespeaks the fourth order, the āśrama of sannyāsa. The first and the second āśramas were established facts in the age of the Brs. and the third and fourth, that of Vānaprastha and Bhikṣu were in the making which became accepted and established in the Upaniṣadic era when the path of renunciation, 'sannyāsa' was highly commended and proved to be superior to the other three stages of life. Upaniṣads proclaim with all the emphasis at their command the importance of knowledge and renunciation which are indispensable to tide over the toils and turmoils of worldly life, to elude the clutches of death and throes of rebirth, and to the realisation of the Supreme Self.

The third and the fourth āśramas assume distinct shape in the Upanisadic era.

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BOOK III

CHAPTER VII

Cosmogony :

In our discussion on 'The theory of sacrifice' the creation of the world out of the first sacrifice performed by the Puruṣa, the Primal Being has been thoroughly dealt with. The cosmogony of the Brs. has also been treated in connection with the mystic interpretation of the fire-altar under the same head. How the creation springs from the sacrifice, the self-sacrifice of Puruṣa or Prajāpati, how the creation goes back to the source of its being, the identity of the sacrifice, sacrificer, Agni, Prajāpati, and the ultimate union of the sacrificer and the deity in the world of heaven have been clearly explained.

So far as the other aspects of the doctrine of creation is concerned several passages are met with in the Brs. in general and the S. B. in particular. In the Brahmanical speculations on cosmogony the metaphysical aspect is often jumbled up with explanations of sacrifice or legends. Besides the Puruṣa-sūkta, the famous Nāsadīya sūkta of the R.V. (X-129) merits importance in connection with the Ṛgvedic cosmogony. According to this hymn creation proceeds from the undifferentiated non-descript Supreme Being. The metaphysical outlook is monistic. 'In the beginning there was neither the 'Non-Existent' (Asat) nor the 'Existent' (Sat). Something can never come out of nothing. Out of nothing, nothing comes. 'Ex nihilo nihil hit ?' Hence the final cause of creation can never be 'asat' or non-existence. Again what is termed 'sat' or 'existing' in this world is visible and subject to change and decay. That type of 'sat' or 'existence' also cannot be

Cosmogony of the Brs. often mixed up with legends.

Hymn of creation and Nāsadīya Sūkta.

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the source of creation. The Supreme Spirit is the source of creation. He can never be termed 'Non-Existence' as His existence is the fountain-head of all existence. Again His existence is a far cry from the phenomenal existence. The definition of worldly existence does not apply to him. The Supreme One existed all alone ; there was no death then, nor immortality. As there was no death, its antithesis immortality cannot come into existence. There was no light, no distinction of day and night. This pre-creation state eludes all attempts at description and defies definition. Thus, the Supreme One is the Absolute which is neither the self nor the not-self but comprises both as the great synthesis. Both mind-stuff and matter, nature and spirit have proceeded from this Absolute One. Thus this hymn embodies the principle of monism, the highest philosophical truth

Monistic trend in Cosmogony.

As stated above, the cosmogony of the Brs. is a curious blending of legends, explanations of rituals and metaphysical thought. The Puruṣa of the R.V. has assumed the form of Prajāpati in the Brs. Most of the Brs. ascribe the source of creation to the austere penance (tapaḥ) of Prajāpati. He practised severe penance and the whole creation along with gods, Vedas, metres, sacrifice etc., was born of that penance. Partially following the trend of the Nāsadīya sūkta the S.B. describes the process of creation in the following manner.[1] In the beginning the universe was neither existent, nor non-existent ; there existed only one entity viz, the Mind. That Mind practised penance longing for a body. The Mind created speech which, in its turn, created the Breath. The Eye was produced by the Breath and the Ear by the Eye. The Ear created action (karma) which generated the Fire which is essential and indispensable to the performance of all sacrificial rites. This Fire is identical with the Fire-altar and the sacrifice. In another chapter, the same Br. records the process of creation in a different manner.[2] There was nothing in the beginning : by Death was this (universe) covered and Death means Hunger. Desiring to have a soul he

Different processes of creation.

1. 10-5-3-1 to 10-5-3-12 (Twelve Brāhmaṇas).
2. 10-6-5-1 (whole of the first Br.)

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created this mind for himself. He propitiated and out of his propitiation (arcā) the waters were produced. 'The cream (froth) that was on the surface of the waters condensed and that hard crust became this earth'.[3] He made himself threefold—Agni, Āditya and Vāyu each of them being one-third of his self. He desired to have a second self and achieved union with speech through his mind. To make his body sacrificially pure he desired to sacrifice by means of another sacrifice. Out of this desire the horse was produced which, therefore, became a sacred (medhya) animal fit to be offered as a victim in the sacrifice. Thus the famous Aśvamedha or horse-sacrifice originated.

The evolution of the world from the cosmic waters which produced the golden egg described in the Smṛiti texts[4] and Purāṇas is also recorded in the S.B.[5], which seems to be the source of this cosmogonic legend. Verily, in the beginning the universe was water, nothing but an illimitable expanse of water. Out of this cosmic water a gold egg was produced which floated 'on the face of the deep' for a whole year. Within the term of a year the Primal Being Prajāpati was produced therefrom rending asunder the shell of the gold egg. There being no resting place he was carried in the shell of the egg which floated for another year. At the end of that year Prajāpati 'uttered' 'bhūḥ' and this word assumed the form of this earth ; he uttered 'bhuvaḥ' which became the air and the word 'Svaḥ' uttered by him assumed the form of the sky.[6] The three words uttered by him comprise five syllables which produced the five seasons. By his vital breath he created the gods. By breathing upwards he created the gods and by his downward breath the Asuras were created. Just as the cosmic water is regarded as the source of creation in this chapter, space or sky (ākāśa, dyouḥ) is also mentioned as the first product of creation that gave birth to other elements in another passage of the S.B.

Creation ascribed to various causes such as,—Absolute, Cosmic Mind, space, cosmic waters etc.

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3. 10-6-5-2—'Tad yadapāṃ śara_āsīt that samahanyata sā pṛthivī abhavat.'

4. Vide Manusaṃhitā, Canto I.

5. 11-1-6 ; the whole of the sixth Brāhmaṇa.

6. 11-1-6-3—'Sa bhūriti vyāharat seyaṃ pṛthivyabhavad, bhuva iti tadidamantarikṣamabhavat svariti sāsau dyourabhavat.'

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connected with the horse sacrifice. In the horse sacrifice a debate called 'brahmodya' takes place between the Hotṛ and the Adhvaryu and another between the Brahman priest and the Udgātṛ. This debate consists in questioning and witty repartee. The Hotṛ priest asks the Adhvaryu, 'What was the first conception ?' The Adhvaryu replies, 'The sky (space) was the first conception.'[7] The Upaniṣads also endorse the view that the first element that emanated from the Supreme Being Brahman was the Ākāśa or Space. 'From this Ātman the space was created ; the space gave birth to Vāyu (wind), the wind generated the heat (Agni) which produced the water and the earth sprang from the water', observes the T.U. 2-1-3. 'It is Ākāśa (space) that makes possible the creation of names and forms', i.e., the phenomenal world, observes the C.U.[8]. This observation of the Brs. and Upaniṣad that space is the first created element without which the creation of the universe is impossible is also supported by the findings of modern science which describes space as 'the pre-condition of creation'.

Another version of the genesis of the universe occurs in the eleventh kāṇḍa of the S.B.[9] The final cause of the universe is termed Brahman (neuter). Verily, in the beginning the Brahman existed ; it created the gods and made them ascend the worlds. The terrestrial world was allotted to Agni, the welkin region to the Wind-god Vāyu and the sky to the Sūrya, the Sun-god. After the creation and allocation of the gods Brahman went up to the sphere beyond and again descended into the three worlds by means of Form (Rūpa) and Name (nāman). The universe cannot exist without these two ; as far as the universe extends, so far also do extend Name and Form. These two are the great forces of the Brahman—two great manifestations of the Ultimate Reality which is invisible and supersensuous. Of these two 'Form is greater than Name ; for whatever is Name, is in-indeed Form.[10] That is to say, anything that has a name must

Names and Forms are the warp and woof of creation.

7. 13-5-2-17—'Dyourāsīt pūrvacittiriti.'
8. 'Ākāśo vai nāma-rūpayornirvahitā.'
9. 11-2-3.
10. 11-2-3-5—'Tayoranyatarajjyāyo rūpameva yaddhyapi nāma rūpameva tat.'

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have a form ; the form comes first, then the name. The form is the product of the Mind and the name is produced by Vāk (speech).

The metaphysical aspect of cosmogony is thus mixed up with legends and explanations of sacrificial rituals. Sometimes the metaphysical element is lost sight of in the meshes of legends spun round it and made much of. A fundamental principle of creation has been faintly hinted in the dissertation of names and forms in the text of the S.B. referred to above. Here we find the germ of the Upaniṣadic doctrine that the Final Reality, the Absolute Principle behind the world-show expresses itself through name and form. Name and form together go to the making of the appearance of the phenomenal world whereas the Absolute encased in names and forms constitutes the reality, the substance of the world-show. Names and forms are evanescent whereas the all-abiding ultimate substratum, the Supreme Being is everlasting.

Eschatology :

In the discussion of 'The theory of sacrifice' and 'The spirit transcending the form' of sacrifice certain aspects of the eschatology of the Brs. have been broadly hinted at. Man is born thrice ; the first birth takes place when he is delivered from the mother's womb ; he is born for the second time when he is initiated for the purpose of sacrificial rites ; after his physical death he is born in heaven in his astral form. These three births are stated in clear terms in the S.B. 11-2-1-1. Thus one's death here is regarded as his birth in the other world, either in the heaven or hell according to the acts of piety or sin committed during his lifetime. Another passage of the same Br. observes—'Those who perform that act (of piety) are reborn after death ; in this rebirth they attain immortality.'[11] This passage clearly refers to the abode of the immortals as the place of the third birth of man, provided he performs pious deeds in general and the sacrifice in particular during his life on earth.

Three births of man.

11. S.B. 10-4-3-10—'Ye vai tat karma kurvate mṛtvā punaḥ sambhavanti te sambhavanta evāmṛtatvamabhisambhavanti.'

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In the heavenly world he attains union with the gods whom he propitiated and pleased during his earthly life. This union with the gods is his term of immortality or life divine. Almost all the Brs. mention three sorts of union with the gods achieved by the sacrificer, viz, Sālokya or attainment of the same region, Sārūpya i.e., attaining the same form and Sāyujya attaining union. The sacrifice 'causes the sacrificer to attain Sāyujya, Sārūpya and Sālokya with the gods', observes the A.B.[12] All the Brs. mention these three sorts of union with the gods as the ultimate result of the sacrifice.[13] The word 'Sālokya' comes from the term 'loka' or region. Every god is allotted a particular region in the celestial abode ; e.g., the abode of Viṣṇu is termed Viṣṇuloka, that of Prajāpati, Prajāpatiloka, that of Varuṇa, Varuṇaloka etc. Attainment of this region is called Sālokya. The term Sārūpya comes from the word 'rūpa' meaning form. Every deity has a particular form and the departed soul of the pious man attains that form of the deity. The remaining term 'Sāyujya' means union, i.e., union with the spirit of the gods. The three terms are graded in sense according to the nature of the union. 'Sālokya' refers to the region of the immortals only and is thus of a lower grade than the other two terms. Sārūpya is union with the form whereas Sāyujya is subtler in sense signifying union with the spirit of the deity. The Brs. do not pursue this aspect of eschatology further. They simply mention the terms. In the post-Vedic age these three terms were taken over by the schools of Vaiṣṇava religion and philosophy and were widely used to denote the three types of union a devotee may achieve with Viṣṇu, the Supreme Godhead. The term "Punarmṛtyu" 'redeath' occurs several times in the Brs. and from the contexts it is evident that this second death applies to the heavenly life of man in the other world and does not apply to the life on earth. It is the antithesis of 'Amṛtatva' or immortality. The first death takes place in this world when a man

Three kinds of union with the gods.

Sārūpya, Sālokya and Sāyujya.

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12. 2-8-6—'Devatānāṃ yajamānaṃ sāyujyaṃ sarūpatāṃ salokatāṃ garmayati.'

13. Vide S.B. 11-6-2-2 ; T.B. 3-10-9-11 ; S.B. 2-6-4-8, 11-4-4-2, etc.

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expires. On expiry he is born in heaven and begins a new chapter of life that may be termed immortal life or divine life. This period of immortality is not a perennial one but will terminate one day. Its duration is commensurate with the acts of piety done on earth. The cessation of this immortal life is called second death which is equivalent to rebirth. Thus death here means birth hereafter and death hereafter in heaven means birth in this world. 'After death a man is born again and again.'[14] This observation is a clear statement of the doctrine of rebirth. The observation of the Brs. that a man's life in the heavenly abode is not eternal but terminates one day finds expression in the Bhagavadgītā—'After enjoying the heavenly world they are again born in this world when their piety is exhausted.[15] From the above it is clear that man is judged according to acts of piety or sin of his earthly life and is sent to heaven or hell respectively. In the age of the Brs. this piety or sin meant the correctness or otherwise of the rituals connected with the sacrifice. Under the head 'The theory of sacrifice' the great emphasis laid by the Brs. on the correctness of rituals has been made abundantly clear with illustrations. The priests, the sacrificer, nay, even the gods have to pay dearly for omissions and commissions. The success of the sacrifice depends on the flawless performance. After his expiry a man is weighed in the balance (tulā) for ascertaining his piety and sin, merits and demerits. If his piety outweighs he enters the world of heaven and shares the immortality of the gods. If his sin outweighs he is resigned to the damnation of the hell. The S. B. clearly refers to this weighing of merit and sin in the balance while praising the performance of the sacrifice known as Darśapaurṇamāsa. 'Verily, they place him on the balance in yonder world, i.e., the other world ; and whichever

Death here means birth hereafter in heaven and vice versa.

Weighing in the balance after death.

14, S.B. 10-4-3-10—'Mṛtvā punaḥ sambhavanti,'

15. 9-2—'Te taṃ bhuktvā svargalokaṃ viśālaṃ
kṣīṇe puṇye martyalokaṃ viśanti.'

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of the two will rise (speak in his favour) he will follow, whether it be the good or the evil. He who knows this mounts the balance even in this world, and escapes the weighing on the balance in the other world because his acts of piety outweigh, not his evil deeds.[16] This weighing of the merit and demerit of the departed soul on the scale in the next world is a very ancient belief common to both the Vedic religion and Zoroastrianism. In the Zend Avesta also this balance and the weighing of the virtue and sin of the departed have been colourfully described. There also the departed spirit is sent to heaven or consigned to hell according to his merit or sin weighed on the scale. The incarnation of the moral order of the universe Nemesis passes judgment on the departed spirit.

The conception of balance is common to both the Vedic and Zoroastrian religion.

The episode of Bhṛgu, son of Varuṇa, narrated in the S.B.[17] and the J.B.[18] presents us with a graphic description of the gruesome harrowings of the hell as also of the blissful atmosphere of the heaven. The slight difference between the two Brs. in the narration of the story is negligible. The episode according to the S.B. runs thus. Bhṛgu, the son of Varuṇa is inflated with pride and deems himself superior to his father. Varuṇa gets scent of this fact and to put him on the right track causes Bhṛgu's spirit to come out under the spell of a temporary trance and visit the different quarters. Bhṛgu thus sped on by the father visits the four cardinal points and the intermediate space. He sees five visions in all of which the same vision visits him in the eastern and southern direction. Hence actually there take place four visions. The first four visions bespeak the harrowings of the hell whereas the fifth and last one bespeaks the effect of reverence and correct procedure of rituals. In the eastern and southern quarters he finds men chopping off the limbs of men one by one

The mystic trance of Bhṛgu and the visions revealed to him.

16. 11-2-7-33—'Tulāyāṃ ha vāmuṣmin loka ādadhāti yataradyaṃsyati tadanveṣyati yadi sādhu vā asādhu vetyatha ya evaṃ vedāsmin haiva loke tulāyāmārohayatyamuṣmin loke tulādhānamucyate sādhukṛtyā haivāsya yacchati na pāpakṛtyā.'

17. 11-6-1.

18. 1-42-4.

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ruthlessly. In the western direction a still more gruesome and hideous spectacle awaits him where he finds men devouring human beings. In his northward journey he meets with the same vision he has seen in the western quarter with the difference that while the tortured men are sitting still in the west, here they are giving out shrill cries of agony. In the intermediate quarter he meets two women ; one beautiful, another superbly beautiful ; in their midst stands a black man with yellow eyes holding a staff in his hand. Bhṛgu returns to his father and seeks clarification of his visions. Varuṇa explains the visions to him. The tortured man whose limbs are being dismembered and those whose flesh is being eaten by the tormentors committed grave sins during their life on earth. The last vision is an allegory. The beautiful damsel symbolises Belief and the over-beautiful one Unbelief. 'When one offers the first libation of the Agnihotra he subdues Belief, and conquers Belief ; when he offers the second libation, he subdues Unbelief, and conquers Unbelief ' The black man with yellow eyes represents Wrath ; when having poured water into the spoon, one offers the libation into the fire, he subdues Wrath. In the J.B. in the fifth vision Bhṛgu sees a beautiful vision where the panorama of the earth and sky, the land and water bespeaks heavenly bliss and profound serenity. He finds five rivers where thousands of white and blue lotuses are blooming merrily, amidst sparkling waves of honey, where the heavenly nymphs disport themselves and the whole atmosphere is charged with the sweet aroma that is constantly wafted from the lotuses and with the sound of music and dance that regale the ears. This is a graphic description of the paradise painted in glowing colours. These five rivers represent the world of god Varuṇa.

Two distinct phases may be traced in the eschatology of the Brs. so far as the union with the gods is concerned. The early Brs. such as the A.B., K.B., etc., always mean the personal gods when they speak of the union of the sacrificer with the gods. The gods are mentioned by name along with their characteristic features and regions. Thus the union with Prajāpati, with Agni, Āditya, Viṣṇu, Varuṇa etc., are mentioned. In the case of this phase of the union with the personal deities in the other world, is the means and the deities are the ends

Two distinct phases in the eschatology of the Brs.

thes acrifice

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in themselves. In the latter Brs., particularly in the S.B. the Impersonal Absolute Godhead termed Brahman is met with, and with the dawning of this conception of the Absolutethe doctrine of metempsychosis also undergoes reorientation and assumes subtler form. The union with the personal gods is no longer recognised as an end in itself but as means to a farther end, viz, union with the Impersonal Absolute or Brahman. In this second phase of the theory of transmigration the worshipper first achieves union with the personal deity through the sacrifice and ultimately with the Absolute Godhead through the union with the personal deity. Thus gods act as a medium, as a means to an end and are no more ends in themselves. 'The Great Brahman is Imperishable (akṣara) and One; all gods and all created beings are ultimately absorbed in this Imperishable All-Soul', observes the S.B.[19] The different gods are described as different doors leading to Brahman in a memorable chapter of the S.B.[20] Thus the gods Agni, Vāyu, Apa (water), Candra (moon), Vidyut (lightning), Āditya have been described as so many doors (Dvāra) leading to the chamber of Brahman. The fact that the gods are reduced from the position of ends to means to a farther end is clear from this passage of the S.B. This absorption of the individual soul into the Absolute self called Brahman or Ātman constitutes the doctrine of salvation or final emancipation termed Mokṣa, Mukti, Apavarga or Parama-puruṣārtha in the Upaniṣads. The conception of the Upanisadic salvation is in the making in the later Brs. 'Through knowledge alone', observes the S.B., 'that state of supreme bliss is attainable; desires cannot reach it; sacrificial gifts, acts of piety or the penance of the ignorant cannot attain that supreme state.'[21] In this important passage, the S.B.

In the first phase gods are ends in themselves; in the second phase they are means to an end.

Germ of Vedantic Mokṣa and path of knowledge.

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19. 10-4-1-9—'Mahad vai brahmaikamakṣaram.....etat hyevākṣaraṃ sarve devāḥ sarvāṇi bhūtānyabhisampadyante.'

20. 11-4-4.

21. 10-5-4-16—'Vidyayā tadārohanti yatra kāmāḥ parāgatāḥ
Na tatra dakṣiṇā yanti nāvidvāṃsastapasvīna iti.'
Na haiva taṃ lokaṃ dakṣiṇābhirna tapasā anevaṃvidaśnuta evaṃvidāṃ haiva sa lokaḥ.'

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not only refers to the state of final beatitude which approximates to the Vedantic conception of final emancipation but also attaches importance to the path of knowledge than to the path of action. S.B. 10-4-3-9 is another passage in point. 'No one shall be immortal with the body ; he who is to become immortal either through knowledge or through holy work, shall become immortal after leaving this body.'[22] Thus the germ of the way of knowledge, Jñāna-mārga may be traced in the S.B.

The nature of the Absolute, the Impersonal Brahman has been clearly stated in the S.B. and the identity of Brahman and Ātman, the Absolute and the self has been mentioned in both the S.B. and the T.B. which will be taken up in our next topic for discussion, viz, 'Theology'.

Theology :

In our discussions relating to 'The theory of sacrifice', 'The spirit underlying the form of the sacrifice', as also to 'Cosmogony' it has been clearly shown how Puruṣa, Prajāpati, Viṣṇu, Rudra etc., came to prominence in successive phases of the Vedic age. Under the 'Emergence of popular religious creeds' the origin and evolution of the Viṣṇu-cult and Rudra-cult has been dealt with. We have shown how the Puruṣa of the R.V. yielded to Prajāpati of the early Brs. who, in his turn, yielded to Rudra in the later Vedic age who ultimately became Śiva. The creation of the universe has been ascribed to various deities such as the Puruṣa, Prajāpati, Cosmic waters, Cosmic Mind and ultimately to Brahman the Absolute Godhead. These topics have been discussed threadbare in the foregoing pages and need no repetition here. Under the present topic our main endeavour will be to show whether the conception of the Impersonal Godhead, the unqualified Absolute All-Soul termed Brahman and identified with Ātman in the Upaniṣads is traceable in the Brs.

Basic conception behind the Vedic Pantheon.

All the gods described in the Saṃhitā and the Brs. are personal gods having anthropomorphic attributes ; they represent different aspects of the natural phenomena ; this conception has been

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22. 'Na.....sahaśarīreṇāmṛtaḥ.....atha vyāvṛtya śarīreṇāmṛto'-sadyo'mṛto'sad vidyayā vā Karmaṇā vā.

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explained and illustrated in this book under 'Emergence of popular religious creeds' quoting the views of yāska, kātyāyana etc. There it has been clearly shown how the different gods, Viṣṇu, Rudra etc., represent the different aspects of the Sun-god. This is the view of Kātyāyana, the author of Sarvānukramaṇī and is amply borne out by the descriptions of different deities met with in the R.V., V.S., A.V. and the T.S. But this Sun-god is also a personal god having personal attributes and not the Impersonal Absolute which is shorn of all attributes and limitations. Yāska, the celebrated author of the Nirukta observes, 'All gods are but the limbs of one Supreme Soul.'[23] Thus Yāska goes a step farther than Kātyāyana and considers the Impersonal Atman to be the source of all the gods. The R.V. also states in unmistakable language—'The wise name the One Existing Reality (Ekaṃ Sat) variously, viz, Indra, Yama, Mātariśvan etc.'[24] Hence the monotheistic tendency traces its origin in the R.V. and culminates in the Absolute monism of the Upaniṣads.

Vedic gods are personal gods.

All gods are the expressions of One Supreme Spirit.

Two divergent views are held by the western scholars regarding the conception of the Impersonal Godhead—Brahman as recorded in the Brs. Scholars headed by Max Müller, Deussen etc., maintain that the conception of the unqualified Absolute Reality is met with in the R.V., A.V. and the Brs. whereas the opposite camp led by Oldenberg, Hertel and the like deny the same. The latter group lays the charge at the door of the Brs. that the Absolute as an Impersonal unqualified Supreme Spirit was not known to the authors of the Brs. This charge falls to the ground as will be borne out by the following discussion. We agree, so far as the early Brs. like the A.B., K.B. etc., are concerned, the Impersonal Absolute Brahman is not met with. But the later Brs., the S.B. and the T.B. in

Conflicting views of western scholars regarding the theology of the Vedas.

Unqualified Impersonal Godhead met with in the later Brs.

23. Nirukta—7-4, 'Ekasyātmanaḥ anye devāḥ pratyaṅgāni bhavanti.'

24. R.V. 1-164-46,—'Ekaṃ sat viprā bahudhā vadanti ··
Agniṃ yamaṃ mātariśvānamāhuḥ.'

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particular, mention the Brahman and Ātman as the Impersonal Supreme Godhead in clear and unambiguous terms.

The term Brahman admits of many meanings in Sanskrit such as prayer, Veda, speech, the Supreme Godhead etc. It is used in the sense of prayer, Veda and speech in all the Brs. Thus the lord of prayer also is meant by 'Brahman' and the term is equated with Bṛhaspati who is the lord of speech as well. Thus 'Brahman is Bṛhaspati'[25], 'Brahman is the Bṛhaspati of the gods.[26] In course of time Brahman surpassed Bṛhaspati also and becomes the greatest amongst all the gods. 'Brahman is the greatest of all the gods.[27] Not only among the gods, 'Brahman is the greatest among all the created beings ; who can vie with Him ?'[28] From this Brahman is still upgraded and conceived of as 'the creator of all the gods.'[29] Death can never touch him. Its essence is immortality itself.[30] The conception rises higher and higher in the metaphysical hierarchy in the S.B. and the T.B. The S.B. regards Brahman as the creator not only of gods but also of the whole universe. 'The heaven and earth are held up by Brahman ;'[31] that is to say, the whole phenomenal world of names and forms function regularly due to His governance. He is the Great Principle behind the world-show, the fountain-head of creation. His existence pervades and permeates the whole universe through and through. Every object of creation draws its sustenance from that inexhaustible perennial fountain. Hence nothing can be minused from Him ;

Different meanings of Brahman.

Gradual evolution of the concept of Brahman,—Impersonal Absolute.

Brahman—greatest of all gods, creator of all beings—is matchless and eternal.

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25. J.B. (U)—1-25-10,—'Brahma vai Bṛhaspatiḥ' ; identical statements in K.B. 7-10, A.B. 1-13-, S.B. 3-1-4-15.

26. G.B.(U)—6-7—'Brahma vai devānāṃ Bṛhaspatiḥ.'

27. S.B. 8-4-1-3—'Brahmaiva devāṅaṃ śreṣṭham.'

28. T.B. 2-8-8-10—'Brahmaiva bhūtānāṃ jyeṣṭhaṃ tena ko'rhati spardhitum.'

29. T.S. 2-8-8-9—'Brahma devānajanayat.'

30. J.B.(U)—1-25-10—'Yad Brahma tadamṛtam'.

31. S.B. 8-4-1-3—'Brahmaṇā dyāvāpṛthivī viṣṭabdhe.'

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that will mean separating the stream from its source without which the stream will run dry in no time. Thus everything, all existence, is rooted in Him. 'Everything is Brahman.'[32] The conception of Brahman as the Imperishable (akṣara) Absolute appears in the S.B. 'The Great Brahman is One and Imperishable ;.... verily, all gods, all beings finally pass into that Imperishable Supreme Being.'[33] Brahman, the soul of the universe, the pulse of creation is also the soul of individuals ; in other words Brahman is also the Ātman ; the Universal soul and the individual soul are one in essence. This identification of Ātman or Self with Brahman the highest principle of the universe is clearly stated in the T.B. 'One ignorant of the Veda can never conceive of Brahman, who as the Ātman is the witness of the whole universe.'[34] 'The whole creation is Ātman' in essence.[35] A passage of the S.B. merits highest importance as it gives us a detailed description of the nature of Ātman, the Supreme Self and identifies Ātman with Brahman and Truth. 'Let him meditate upon Brahman the Truth, ...Let him meditate on the Self, Ātman, which is made of intelligence, and endowed with a body of spirit, with a form of light, and with an ethereal nature, which changes its shape at will, is swift as thought, of true resolve, and true purpose, which consists of all sweet colours and tastes, which holds sway over all the regions and pervades this whole creation, which is speechless and indifferent—even as a grain of rice, or a grain of barley, or a grain of millet or the smallest granule of millet, so is this golden Puruṣa in the

Brahman, the fountain of all creation.

It is at once the soul of the universe and the soul of the individual.

Identification of Brahman, Ātman and Truth with one another.

Nature of the Supreme Self as stated in the S.B.

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32. G.B.(P)—5-25—'Brahmaiva sarvam.'

33. S.B. 10-4-1-9—'Mahad vai Brahmaikamakṣaram ; etat hyevākṣaraṃ sarve devāḥ sarvāṇi bhūtānyabhisampadyante.'

34. T.B. 3-1-12-7—'Nāvedavinmanute taṃ vṛhantaṃ sarvānubhūmātmānam.'

35. S.B. 4-2-2-1—'Sarvaṃ hyayamātmā.'

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heart ; even as a smokeless steady column of light, it is greater than the sky, greater than the ether, greater than all existing things ; that self of the spirit is my self : on passing away from this world I shall obtain that self.'[36] Here the identification of Brahman, Ātman, the Soul of man and the soul of the universe, Truth, with one another is complete. The Impersonal Supreme Spirit is at once the spirit of man and the spirit of the universe ; He is both immanent and transcendent simultaneously. He is the source of creation and pervades creation in his qualified form while he transcends it in his impersonal unqualified (Nirguṇa) character. That Absolute All-Soul is not attainable through the sacrifice, sacrificial fees or mechanical penance of one steeped in ignorance. 'It can be attained through knowledge (vidyā) alone,' observes the S.B.[37]

The Supreme spirit is attainable through knowledge par excellence.

After death, the spirit is released from the trammels of the flesh but if desire and nescience persist the spirit fails to attain final emancipation, i.e., complete absorption into the Universal soul. When the individual soul shakes itself free from all desires and ignorance, then alone it can attain final emancipation or Mokṣa. The difference between these two types of people is clearly stated in the T.B. "Some passing away from this world thus realise the self ; 'I am this Self', some (due to ignorance) fail to realise the Self."[38] Thus both the S.B. and T.B. stress the importance of knowledge for the purpose of Self-realisation and clearly state that mere performance of rituals bereft of knowledge, par excellence, cannot attain the Supreme Godhead ; at best it helps the performer to achieve union with personal gods. The path of knowledge is thus eulogised.

Praṇava or Oṅkāra, the eternal verbum and the holy syllable is regarded as the symbol of the Supreme Spirit Brahman.

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36. S.B. 10-6-3—'Satyaṃ brahma] ityupāsīta.....ātmānaṃ pretyābhisambhaviṣyāmīti.'

37. 10-5-4-16—'Vidyayā tadārohanti yatra kāmāḥ parāgatāḥ
Na tatra dakṣiṇā yanti nāvidvāṃsastapasvinaḥ.'

38. 3-10-11-1—'Kaścid ha va asmāllokāt pretyātmānaṃ vedāyamahamasmīti.
Kaścit svaṃ lokaṃ na pratiprajānāti.'

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'Praṇava is the eternal imperishable verbal expression of the Absolute'. It includes all beings, pervades the past, present and future and transcends them as well.[39] This Upanisadic teaching is also met with in the Brs. The K.B. regards the holy syllable Praṇava as the holy of holies, as complete in itself and flawless, as the expression of the Absolute Impersonal Spirit. 'Verily, Brahman is Praṇava.'[40] This statement occurs in the G.B. also with slight variation.[41] Thus we find that the identification of Brahman, Ātman, Satyam (Truth) and Praṇava the Holy Syllable with one another is complete in the Brs. The knowledge, par excellence, enables one to realise the Supreme Self which is impersonal and unqualified, eternal and uncaused. It transcends the universe, transcends the limitations of time and space and exists in an eternal now. It is not subject to birth, change, decay or death. It is the final reality, the ultimate cause from which proceeds this phantasmagoria of names and forms. It is causeless, the 'Causa Sui', self-revealed and the never-changing One in the ever-changing many.

The holy syllable Praṇava, the eternal verbum is the symbol of the Absolute Godhead.

The S.B. and the T.B. advocate the path of knowledge in clear terms for attaining Salvation which is absorption of the individual self in the Supreme Self. The T.B. states that one devoid of the Supreme Knowledge can never realise the Supreme Brahman at the time of hi expiry in his onward journey to the next world.[42] Quoting a Śruti passage the same Br. observes—'This is the eternal greatness and glory of the Supreme Brahman that good deeds cannot

The S.B. and T.B. advocate the path of knowledge.

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39. Māṇḍūkya. U.—1—'Omityetadakṣaraṃ sarvam..... Bhūtaṃ bhavad bhaviṣyaditi sarvamoṅkāra eva, yaccānyat trikālātītaṃ tadapyoṅkāra eva.'

40. K.B. 11-4-,—'Brahma vai praṇavaḥ.'

41. G.S. (U)—3-11,—'Brahma ha praṇavaḥ.'

42. 3-12-9-7—'Nāvedavinmanute taṃ vṛhantam. Sarvānubhūmātmānaṃ saṃparāyai.'

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magnify it, (i.e., further its greatness), nor can evil deeds drag it down. Realising this Supreme Godhead an enlightened individual becomes its very soul; (i.e., becomes one with the Supreme Brahman). Sinful acts can no more taint him.'[43] Such an enlightened seeker is released for good from the worldly bondage. The statement that such an individual illumined with the light of Supreme Knowledge becomes the very Self of the Supreme Self, i.e., becomes one with Brahman finds corroboration and clear exposition in such Upaniṣadic passages as, 'Verily, he who knows the Brahman, becomes Brahman'.[44]

The Upaniṣadic Doctrine of Mokṣa, final emancipation foreshadowed.

Beginnings Of Philosophical Systems :

The beginnings of different philosophical systems may be traced in the Brs. just as the nucleus thereof is met with in the ṚK-saṃhitā. In the foregoing pages under 'Cosmogony', 'Eschatology' and 'Theology' it has been clearly proved that the Vedantic conception of Absolute Impersonal Supreme Spirit and the Vedantic doctrine of final emancipation or Mokṣa are foreshadowed in the Brs. The S.B. and T.B. are the precursors of these Upanisadic doctrines and recommend the path of knowledge as the means to attain the Supreme Self. The cosmology of the Upanisads also traces its beginnings in the Brs. as shown under 'Cosmogony'. The Brs. like the Upaniṣads conceive the space (Ākāśa) as the first visible manifestation of the invisible Brahman, and names and forms as the warp and woof wherewith the universe is created.

The germ of Vedānta philosophy.

Though the germ of the Upanisadic or Vedānta philosophy is met with in the Brs. the latter do not uphold the illusory nature

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43. 3-12-9-7—'Eṣa nityo mahimā brāhmaṇasya
na karmaṇā vardhate no kanīyān
Tasyaivātmā padavittaṃ viditvā,—
na karmaṇā lipyate pāpakena.'

44. Brahmavid Brahmaiva bhavati'
'Sa yo ha vai tat paramaṃ Brahma veda
sa Brahmaiva bhavati.'

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(māyā-vāda) of the world-show which the Vedānta characterises as neither real nor unreal but as indescribable (anirvacanīya). The Brs. maintain that the world is real, creation is a reality. Thus the realistic systems like Sānkhya, Yoga etc., are foreshadowed in the Brs. The Sānkhya doctrine of the Cosmic mind and its first product is hinted at in the S.B. The discipline of student life narrated in the G.B. and the S.B. mark the beginnings of the physical aspect of the Yoga-philosophy. The doctrine of causation of the Brs. so far as the phenomenal world is concerned smacks of the realism (satkārya-vāda) of the Sānkhya. The term Māyā with the Vedantic import is never met with in the Brs.

The Sāṇkhya and Yoga systems foreshadowed.

Under 'Education' in Book I the syllabus of the then education has been enumerated in details. Debates, metaphysical discourses and theological dissertations formed important items of the syllabus and were a common feature of the cultural life of the later Vedic age. The particular item of study known as 'Vākovākyam' consisted in intelligent questionings and witty repartees. Scholars both eastern and western have rightly arrived at the conclusion that this Vākovākyam is the germ of Indian logic or Nyāya-darśana or Tarka-śāstra as it encourages ratiocination, intellectual logic-chopping and verbal jugglery. So far as the doctrine of causality is concerned the Brs. do not subscribe to the Asatkārya-vāda of the Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika school, but uphold the Satkārya-vāda of the Sānkhya-Yoga school.

The germ of Nyāya philosophy.

In the introduction to this work, the Brs. have been shown to be the sheet-anchor of the Pūrva-mīmāṃsā system of Indian philosophy just as the Upanisads are the bedrock of Vedānta philosophy. The apparently contradictory statements of the Brs. have been discussed and solved in this system of philosophy. As the Brs. embody the vast and varied paraphernalia of the sacrificial machinery and as the Pūrva-mīmāṃsā is based on them, this school of Indian philosophy also goes by the name of Karma-mīmāṃsā or Dharma-mīmāṃsā. Sage Jaimini recorded his solutions and findings relating to Brahmanical texts in the form of aphorisms in this

Brs. form the bedrock of Pūrva-mīmāṃsā system.

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system just as sage Vadarāyaṇa recorded his views on the Upanisadic tenets in aphoristic form in the Vedānta system or Uttara-mīmāṃsā. As the Pūrva-mīmāṃsā looks up to the Vedas for its source and sustenance it is but natural that it sings the glory of the Vedas and upholds the eternality and authority of the Vedas.

Thus the beginnings of the Vedānta, Sānkhya, Yoga, Nyāya and Pūrva-mīmāṃsā systems of Indian philosophy are met with in the Brs.

Summary Of Book III

Sacrificial practice constitutes the main religion of the Brs. The Vedic Aryans are agricultural people and have to rely on the natural phenomena for successful farming. Hence they look upon the different aspects of natural phenomena as so many deities and try their best to propitiate them. Every man is born with three debts one of which is a debt to the gods which he pays off by performing sacrifices. Sacrifice is the medium for attaining both material prosperity and heavenly rewards. Heavenly bliss is the real and final goal of a sacrifice, the worldly gains being auxiliary to it. Vedic Aryans are not wholly other-worldly in their outlook, they long for both heavenly joy and material prosperity in every form. There are various sacrifices serving different ends ; some are obligatory whereas others are occasional. Wish-yielding sacrifices are also occasional and their results range from the birth of a son, bringing down rain etc., to the attainment of union with the deity. Sacrifice is the connecting link among the sacrifice, sacrificer, priests, gods and heaven. Initiation into sacrifice is regarded as a new (spiritual) birth of the sacrificer and his attainment of heaven through sacrifice as another birth. Death here means birth in heaven and cessation of the tenure of heavenly life means birth on earth. The sacrificer achieves three types of union with the gods of the sacrifice in heaven after shuffling off his mortal coil, viz, attainment of the same region, same form and union with the deity called sālokya, sārūpya and sāyujya respectively.

The sacrifice is the source of creation. The Primal Being called Puruṣa offers himself as the victim in the first sacrifice performed

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by him. Thus he is both the sacrificer and the victim. Out of his self-sacrifice springs up the whole universe with the four Vedas, four castes, animals, both domestic and wild, the sun and the moon, the firmament, quarters, fire, air etc. Thus the one Puruṣa who was without a second before creation becomes many through the sacrifice which is, in reality, his self-sacrifice. The germs of Upanisadic speculations such as—"The supreme spirit mused, 'I shall become many', 'His one form has assumed the diverse names and forms'," etc., may be traced in this cosmic sacrifice.

The correctness of rituals is strictly enjoined and any bungling or carelessness brings severe repercussions on the priests and even on the gods. Sacrifice is a far cry from magic or the black art of necromancy.

The mystic interpretation of the fire-altar recorded in the S.B. and discussed under 'The theory of sacrifice' merits great importance as it is symbolic of creation and effects complete identification of the Prajāpati, sacrificer, sacrifice, fire, altar, the Sun-god, year and the performing priests with one another. The beginnings of image-worship may be traced in the goldman symbolic of the Sun-god, creator Prajāpati and Agni jointly. The structure of the Fire-altar with ten thousand eight hundred bricks is a standing testimony to the architecture of the later Vedic age.

Some sacrifices have a political bearing such as the Rājasūya, the Vājapeya, Aśvamedha etc. ; they are connected with the consecration ceremony, imperialism and paramount sovereignty etc.

The priests play the most important role in a sacrifice. Their duty is onerous and they enjoy a highly esteemed position in society. In the age of the R.V. the rituals were simple and called forth for a small number of priests. As ages rolled on, the rituals became more and more complicated and grand sacrifices came into existence. Originally there were only five priests in the early Vedic age, viz, Hotṛ, Adhvaryu, Agnīdhra, Grāvastut and Pratipasthātṛ. In the later Vedic age the number swells to sixteen and including the sacrificer or the sadasya it comes up to seventeen. There are four Ṛgvedic, four Yajurvedic, four Sāma-vedic priests and four Superintending priests called Brahman. None could do without priests—not even the king as the royal consecration,

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upgrading of the status of a monarch, victory in war etc., are also connected with sacrifices. The priests begin to lose their hold on the king and the people when sacrifices come to be underrated and greater importance is attached to the path of knowledge than to the path of action.

The form and the spirit of the sacrifice developed side by side. The charge often laid at the door of the Brs. that they make much of the form and lose sight of the essence of sacrifice is unfounded. Various passages in the A.B., S.B. and the T.B. uphold the importance of reverence, truth and knowledge necessary for the proper performance of sacrificial rituals. Without reverence and belief the rituals fail to produce the desired effect. In the absence of material oblations a sacrificer is enjoined to offer reverence or Śraddhā as the oblation in the Agnihotra rites. The sceptical attitude towards the externals of sacrifice is also met with. People doubt and question the efficacy of sacrifices. In the S.B. and T.B. we find greater stress laid on the spirit underlying the form of the sacrifice and on the path of knowledge. Thus these two Brs. clearly mark the phase of transition from the Br. to the Āraṇyaka and the Upaniṣad where sacrifice is underrated and the path of knowledge is recommended.

The evolution of the Bhakti-cult and the emergence of popular religious creeds is traced in the Brs. The Viṣṇu-cult and the Rudra-Śiva-cult evolve and assume definite shape during the age of the Brs. The emergence of the Rudra-cult forms an interesting study. The gradual stages of its evolution from the R.V. to the S.B., the dialectic process of its growth and the final synthesis in the all-comprehensive form of Rudra, how the terrific Rudra becomes the benign Śiva have been clearly delineated under 'Emergence of popular religious cults'. It has been clearly shown how the conception of Rudra-Śiva solves the dialectics of the social structure.

Perhaps the first reference to places of pilgrimage (tīrtha) occurs in the Rudrādhyāya of the V.S. where god Rudra is described as visiting the places of pilgrimage. These popular religious cults with their emphasis on the path of devotion appeal to the mass mind which fails to realise the significance of sacrifices. To the common people the grand sacrifices appear to be a festivity on account of the horse-race, chariot-race, gambling, beating of drums, sounds of various musical instruments and vocal music

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connected with them. The horse races, chariot races and the music accompanying them present the picture of a national Olympic game. Thus the spiritual effect of sacrifice is lost on the commoner. While some enlightened persons realise the efficacy of sacrifice others underrate the externals of sacrifice and attach greater importance to its spirit. The common people resort to the popular religious creeds like the Viṣṇu-cult, Rudra-cult etc., and the more enlightened ones take to the path of knowledge.

The influence of non-Aryan religion and primitive faith is discernible in certain crude rites that shock our sense of decency and decorum, e.g., the rites performed by the chief queen in the horse sacrifice and some sexual acts performed in the sacrifices known as Mahāvrata and Gosava. The Rudra-cult appears to be a primitive one prevalent among the aboriginal people that was taken over and reoriented by the Aryans.

Among the sacraments, the natal ceremony, tonsure, investiture with the holy thread (upanayana) and studentship, marriage, disposal of the dead and the śrādh ceremony are met with in the Brs. Of the five great daily sacrifices the study of the Veda and hospitality in particular are dealt with in the Brs. The hospitable spirit of the Vedic Aryans is clearly proved by the passages concerned.

So far as the four orders of life are concerned explicit mention and detailed treatment of two orders alone, viz, the order of Brahmacarya and Gārhasthya is found in the Brs. Explicit mention of the third and the fourth orders called Vānaprastha and Bhikṣu respectively is not met with though the existence of those two orders may be inferred from stray references. The S.B. and the G.B. present a clear picture of the student life of the later Vedic age. The orders of Vānaprastha and Sannyāsa which are in the making in the age of the Brs. take definite shape and gain in importance in the age of the Āraṇyakas and Upaniṣads.

The doctrine of creation adumbrated in the Brs. is mixed up with legends and explanations of sacrificial rituals. Sometimes the metaphysical element is lost sight of in the meshes of legends spun round it and made much of. The theory of sacrifice and the mystic interpretation of the fire-altar stated above embody two aspects of the cosmogony of the Brs. Different causes are stated in different texts of the Brs. as the cause of creation. The

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sacrifice, the penance of the Primal Being, Cosmic waters, the space (Ākāśa), the Cosmic Mind, etc., are regarded as different sources of creation. The S.B. mentions Brahman (neuter), the Supreme Absolute as the final cause of the universe. Sometimes the term 'Ātman', Supreme Self, is also used to signify this final cause and the identification of the Ātman and Brahman, as stated in the following lines, is complete in the S.B. and T.B. Names and forms are the warp and the woof with which the Supreme spirit weaves the texture of the universe.

The theology of the Brs. includes both personal gods and the Impersonal Unqualified Absolute. In the early Brs. the conception of the Impersonal Godhead, Unqualified Supreme Spirit is not met with. We come across personal god with anthropomorphic attributes representing different aspects of natural phenomena such as god Viṣṇu, Prajāpati, Agni, Rudra, Varuṇa etc. All the gods are but different aspects of the Sun-god. The conception of Vedic pantheon is not polytheistic like the Greek pantheon. It is monotheistic and also, in the words of Max Müller, kathenotheistic or henotheistic ; i.e., whenever a deity is worshipped he or she is worshipped as the Supreme God. The charge that the Impersonal Unqualified Absolute is not traceable in the Brs. is unfounded. The early Brs. like the A.B., K.B. etc., do not refer to the Impersonal Godhead but the S.B. and the T.B. clearly mention the Impersonal Absolute Spirit termed Brahman in the neuter gender. The terms Brahman, Ātman and Satyam (Truth) have been identified with one another and the eternal verbum, the holy syllable Om is regarded as the verbal expression of the Imperishable Impersonal Absolute which defies expression and eludes definition. Brahman is the creator of all the gods, all sentient and insentient beings and the whole universe. It transcends the limitations of time, space, sound and death. Truth, immortality, self-luminosity, infinity are some of its characteristics. The S.B. gives a detailed description of the Self. In the early Brs. union with a personal god through the medium of sacrifice is the goal of the sacrificer ; the sacrifice is the means and union with a personal god is the end ; but in the later Brs. union with the All-soul or Impersonal Godhead is the end and the personal gods to whom the sacrifice is offered are but means to this end. All existence is rooted in Brahman.

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Every object of creation draws its sustenance from that inexhaustible perennial fountain. All beings finally pass into that imperishable Absolute which is at once the universal soul and the individual soul. One ignorant of the Veda can never conceive of Brahman. Both the S.B. and T.B. observe that it is attainable through knowledge. "Some passing away from this world thus realise the Self—'I am this Self, some due to ignorance fail to realise the Self" (T.B.). Thus both the S.B. and T.B. stress the importance of knowledge for the purpose of self-realisation and clearly state that mere performance of rituals bereft of knowledge, par excellence, cannot attain the Supreme Godhead. Thus the later Brs. anticipate the Upaniṣads which decry mere rituals shorn of knowledge, eulogise the path of knowledge, describe the Absolute Spirit Brahman as impersonal and unqualified eternal Being and identify the Self, Supreme Spirit and Truth with one another.

The summary of the discussion on the theology of the Brs. given above throws some light on the eschatology of the Brs. Some achieve union with the personal gods after passing away from this planet of ours while others purged of all desires and sins, and purified by knowledge attain union with the Supreme Spirit. The former class enjoys the heavenly world for a limited period on termination of which they are reborn in this world. The latter elude the clutches of birth and death for ever by attaining final emancipation which means complete absorption into the All-soul. The S.B. and the T.B. embody the doctrine of final emancipation called Mokṣa in clear terms. The attainment of heaven or hell after death according to acts of piety or sin done during the life on earth is stated in the Brs. Man is weighed in a balance after death and is consigned to heaven or hell according as the scale speaks in favour of his merits or demerits. This weighing of the merit and demerit of the departed soul on a scale in the next world is an ancient belief common to both the Vedic religion and Zoroastrianism. The S.B. and the J.B. paint the tortures of the hell as also the idyllic picture of the paradise in glowing colours. These descriptions of the heaven and hell of the S.B. and the J.B. anticipate similar descriptions of the Paradise and the hades given in the Purāṇas and the Koran, as also of the pictures of the Paradise and the Inferno painted by Dante in his

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'La Divina Comedia'. The Brs. state the doctrine of transmigration and metempsychosis in unambiguous language.

Beginnings of several important systems of Indian philosophy are traceable in the Brs. The observations of the S.B. and the T.B. on the unqualified Supreme Absolute clearly foreshadow the Absolute monism of the Advaita Vedānta philosophy. The Brāhmaṇas, as stated in the introduction to this work, form the basis of the Pūrva-Mīmāṃsā system which attempts to solve the apparently contradictory statements of the Brs. and uphold the authority of the Veda. The debates, and witty repartees implied by the particular literary form known as 'Vākovākyam' are precursors of the Nyāya-darśana or the Indian logic. The doctrine of creation adumbrated in the Brs. and dealt with in Book III under "Cosmogony" embodies the realistic outlook of the Sānkhya system. The universe is not treated as an illusion or Māyā but as a reality.

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BOOK III

MISCELLANEOUS

CHAPTER I

FLORA & FAUNA

The Flora :

The Brs. mention a large number of trees. The fact that plants have life and consciousness was known to the authors of Brāhmaṇas. That portion of a plant which was withered and bereft of sap was regarded as dead. 'That part of a tree which is fresh and uninjured is living' says S.B.[1] The term 'Vanaspati' was applied to all trees in general in that age and not in the particular sense of trees which bear fruit without putting forth flowers.

Plants possess life and consciousness.

In the Vedic literature the vegetable world is broadly divided into two classes, Oṣadhi or Virudh plants, shrubs, and Vṛkṣa, tree. The term Vṛkṣa also goes by the name of Vana which, in reality, is its collective aspect. The V.S. (22-28) and the T.S. (7-3-20-1) give a list of the different parts of which a plant is made up. The list comprises the root (mūla), the panicle (tūla), the stem (kāṇḍa), the twig (valśa), the flower (puṣpa), and the fruit (phala) ; in addition to these parts trees possess a corona (skandha), branches (śākhā) and leaves (parṇa). The A.V. (8-7-4) classifies the plants under the following heads ; those that expand (prastṛṇatīḥ), those that are bushy (stambinīḥ), have only one sheath (eka-śuṅgāḥ), those that creep (pratanvatīḥ), have many stalks (aṃśumatīḥ), are knotty or jointed (kāṇḍinīḥ) or those that have spreading branches (viśākhāḥ).

Division of the vegetable world.

Different parts of a plant.

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1. 9-2-2-3—'Etad vai vanaspatīnāmanārtaṃ jīvaṃ yadārdram'.

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All the three Brs. the A.B., S.B. and T.B. mention Pītu Dāru Pinus Deodora i.e., Pine-tree, Palāśa (Butea monosperma), Nyagrodha (Ficus indica), Plakṣa (Ficus infectoria), Aśvattha (Ficus religiosa), Udumvara i.e., Ficus glomerata, Vilva or Aegle marmelos, and Khadira (Acacia catechu). The banyan tree or Nyagrodha was considered as a Kṣatriya, the Aśvattha as the sovereign, and Palāśa as the Brahmin amongst trees. 'The banyan tree is Kṣatriya or king among the trees.'[2] 'Aśvattha is the emperor of trees[3] and the Palāśa is the Brahmin'[4] in the vegetable kingdom. Thus we find a gradual hierarchy, a veritable feudal system existing in the vegetable world. Palāśa holds the spiritual away being Brahmin, Nyagrodha is the lord or king of trees but subordinate to Aśvattha which is the overlord or samrāt ; other trees are subjects or Viśa. The Plakṣa tree or Ficus infectoria is also regarded as a monarch representing Svārājya and Vairājya types of suzerainty amongst trees.[5] These types of sovereignty have been discussed in the political aspect of this book.

Hierarchy in the vegetable kingdom.

The characteristics of some trees are recorded in the Brāhmaṇas. Repeatedly it is mentioned in the S.B. that banyan trees (Nyagrodha) never grow straight ; they are slightly inclined to one side.[6] The tree that grows tallest in the vegetable kingdom is Śālmalī or Cotton tree termed 'Salmalia malabarica' in Botany.[7] It is also called 'Bombax malabaricum' in some books. The tree called Śamī, the Vedic people believed, contained fire within it. The two sticks called Araṇi which were rubbed against each other to produce fire in the Vedic age were made of Śamī wood. This process of ignition or producing fire was termed Agnimanthana which literally means 'churning of fire'. Botanically Śamī is called 'Prosopis spicigera'.

Characteristics of some trees.

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2. A.B. 7-35-5—'Kṣatraṃ vā etad vanaspatīnāṃ yannyagrodhaḥ.'
3. A.B. 7-35-6—'Yadaśvatthaḥ sāmrājyaṃ vā etad vanaspatīnām.'
4. S.B. 1-1-1-4 13-8-4-1—'Brahma vai palāśaḥ.'
5. A.B. 7-35-6—'Yat plakṣaḥ svārājyaṃ ca ha vā etad vairājyaṃ ca vanaspatīnām.'
6. S.B. 13-2-7-3—'Nyañca nyagrodhā rohanti.'
7. S.B. 13-2-7-4—'Sālmalīrvanaspatīnāṃ varṣiṣṭhaṃ vardhate.'

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Udumvara, Khadira, Vilva and Palāśa were regarded as sacred trees and hence their branches, twigs, wood and stalks were widely used in various sacraments and rites. Fire-wood or samidh, the throne or Āsandī of the monarch in coronation or consecration ceremony, the razor in certain holy rites were made of Udumvara wood. Once during titanomachia or the fight between the gods and demons (Asuras) all the trees deserted the Devas or gods and sided with the Asuras or demons ; the Udumvara tree alone sided with the gods,[8] hence it was a great favourite of the gods and hence it was widely used in holy rites and rituals connected with gods. The Khadira tree or Acacia catechu was used for sacrificial purpose. The Yūpa or stake for animal-slaughter in sacrifice was made of Khadira wood. The branches and wood of Palāśa and Vilva trees were required in sacraments connected with the priestly class or Brāhmaṇa community in particular. Thus, during the investiture with the holy thread or Upanayana ceremony the staff or Daṇḍa of the Brāhmaṇa boy was made of either Palāśa or Vilva tree.

Sacred trees.

Besides the above-mentioned trees S.B. also mentions Kārṣmarī Gmelina arborea, Vikankata or Flacourtia sapida, plants which are full-berried or which yield berries (6-4-3-2), Jujube or plum trees of different classes (5-5-4-10), Arka or Calotropis gigantes, Uśana, Vāraṇa or Crataeva Rox burghii, Vibhītaka or Terminalia bellerica or Belleric myrobalan etc. Trees that were used for sacrificial purpose were regarded as sacred. S.B. (1-3-3-10) calls such trees yajñiya vṛkṣa (sacrificial tree) and gives a list of such trees which comprises Palāśa, Vikankata, Karṣmarya, Vilva, Khadira and Udumbara. The name of Udumbara, 'Ficus glomerata' does not occur in the R.V. but occurs frequently in the A.V., V.S., T.S., and the Brs. The sweetness of its ripe fruit is mentioned in the A.B. where the taste of its ripe fruits is compared with that of honey. The tree, says the A.B., bears fruit three times a year. The P.B. (16-6-4) mentions a forest of Udumvara trees.

Amongst scented plants the A.B. mentions Guggulu or Bdellium (1-5-2) and scented grass, commonly known as khas-

8. Vide S.B. 6-6-3-2.

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khas in Indian vernacular (1-5-2). To this list the S.B. adds Sugandhi Tejanam or Scented red grass (3-5-2-17) and Vīriṇa (13-8-1-15) a kind of fragrant grass called venā in Indian vernacular and verbena in English. The roots of Vīriṇa or Verbena are fragrant.

Aromatic plants.

Among shrubs and herbs are mentioned sugar-cane, vetas or cane plant, Bhūmi-pāsa or reeds, Aloes, Muñjā from the fibres of which silk-like threads were produced, Avakā called Blyxa Octandra, a grassy plant growing in marshy land, kuśa, the holy sacrificial grass, Durbā grass and the like. Durbā grass is called 'king of herbs'[9]. Shrubs, herbs, creepers, medicinal plants and plants that die after yielding fruits—all these are termed Oṣadhi in the Brāhmaṇa texts. Aśvagandhā, Arka, Apāmārga or Achyranthes Aspera, etc., are mentioned amongst medicinal plants. A shrub with speckled or dappled leaves was called Pṛśni-parṇī, a telltale name indeed (S.B. 13-8-1-16). The S.B. mentions a tree named Rajjudāla from the bark of which rope was produced ; its botanical name is Cordia myxa (13-4-4-5).

Shrubs and herbs.

Among flowers lotus alone is mentioned several times in the S.B. Lotus flower, lotus leaf, lotus seeds, lotus lake are met with. The J.B. mentions white and blue lotuses that bloom in the river of paradise in the Varuṇaloka mentioned in Book III under 'Eschatology'.

Flowers.

The Fauna :

We have already discussed some of the domestic animals under the caption, 'Agriculture and Pasturage'. Domestic, beasts are called 'Grāmyā Paśavaḥ' as distinct from wild beasts —'Āraṇyāḥ Paśavaḥ'. From the point of reverence and utility the cow was looked upon as the most sacred animal but from the point of grace, vigour, majesty, speed etc., the horse was held in the highest esteem by the Aryans of the Vedic age. 'The horse is the most fortunate and favoured of all animals'.[10] The S.B. contains several passages which are glowing eulogies of the horse. 'The horse is

Eulogy of horse.

9. A.B. 8-37-4—'Kṣatraṃ vā etadoṣadhīnāṃ yad dūrvā.'
10. S.B. 6-3-3-13—'Aśvaḥ paśūnāṃ bhagitamaḥ.'

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the most vigorous of all animals, most powerful, most blessed and most famous of all animals'.[11] The dignity and stateliness of the steed is all the more heightened when with the bridle on it lifts its neck in regal majesty. Hence the Vedic bard observes, 'When curbed by reins the horse looks most beautiful'.[12] The horse represents the nobility amongst animals.[13] Animals have been classed under two heads—those having one row of teeth and those having double rows of teeth. This observation of the Brāhmaṇas traces its origin in the Hymn of creation or Puruṣa-sūkta of Ṛgveda where it is said—'From that primal sacrifice were born horses and all animals having two rows of teeth.[14] Besides cow and horse, sheep, goats, ass and mules are mentioned amongst domesticated animals. The mule was regarded as the fastest running beast. Like horse-race mule-races were also held.

Species of deer.

Various varieties of the deer are mentioned. The stag or deer is often mentioned as a symbol of strength due to its speed. The black antelope called Kṛṣṇa-mṛga or Kṛṣṇa-sāra was regarded as a sacred animal; Brahmacārins, ascetics used to put on its skin as their garment known as Kṛṣṇājina. Even female ascetics used to put on this dress as an external mark of asceticism. From the Rāmāyaṇa we come to learn that this custom prevailed in the epic age as well. Śabarī, the female hermit has been described in the Rāmāyaṇa as 'a renowned ascetic with her hair matted wearing a garment made of the skin of black antelope'[15] Regarding the sanctity of he-goats, ewes and cows or bulls the S.B. remarks—'He-goats are sacred to the Aśvins, ewes to Saraswatī and cows and bulls to Indra.'[16] The order of merit amongst

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11. S.B. 'Aśvaḥ paśūnāṃ vīryavattamaḥ' (13-1-2-5).
'Aśvaḥ paśūnāmojasvitamaḥ' (13-1-2-6).
'Aśvaḥ paśūnāmārśiṣṭhaḥ' (13-1-2-7).
'Aśvaḥ paśūnāṃ yaśasvitamaḥ' (13-1-2-8).
12. S.B. 13-2-7-9—'Aśvo raśmiṇa pratihṛto bhūyiṣṭhaṃ rocate.'
13. S.B. 12-2-2-17—'Atho kṣatraṃ vāśvaḥ.'
14. R.V. X-90—'Tasmādaśvā ajāyanta ye ke cobhayādataḥ.'
15. Rāmāyaṇa—'Cīrakṛṣṇājināmbaradharā jatilā siddhā tāpasī.'
16. 12-7-2-7—'Āśvinīrajāḥ, sārasvatīravīḥ, aindrīrgāvaḥ.'

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domestic animals ranging from man to goat is thus arranged—man, horse, cow, ram and goat.[17] Mule is a product of mating of horse and ass but mules cannot procreate. This biological factor was known to the people of the Vedic age. An ass was called Rāsabha because it used to bray. The root Ras means to bray.[18] The S.B. mentions camels (uṣṭra) (1-2-39), porcupine (śalyaka) (2-6-4-5), wolf (vṛka) (5-1-5-22), Dragon called Jambhayantaḥ Ahiḥ, (5-1-5-22), elephant (3-1-3-4), tortoise (kūrma, (6-1-1-12, 7-5-1-1), lion (5-5-4-10), lioness (3-5-1, 3-5-25, also A.B. (6-30-9), bitch and mare (6-5-2-19) etc. The elephant was fashioned out of human flesh, hence it is enjoined that elephant should not be accepted as a gift.[19] Śarabha, a fabulous animal with eight legs is also mentioned (S.B. 1-2-3-9 and A.B. 2-6-8). Both S.B. and A.B. mention an animal called Gavaya or Gomṛga which is translated as wild cow. Eggeling translates it as a buffalo. The tiger is called the Kṣatriya among the beasts, i.e., 'King of beasts' whereas the lion is termed, 'ruler of wild beasts' in S.B. (12-7-1-8).[20] A.B. refers to white stallion (6-30-9) and cat (6-29-1). The cat is sparingly or very rarely mentioned in the Vedic literature. In the text of A.B. referred to, it is called 'Okaḥsārī'. Okas means house and because the cat moves from house to house it is so called. The frog (maṇḍūka) and the mouse or mole (ākhu) are met with in S.B. The T.B. also mentions mouse (ākhu). Both S.B. and A.B. mention an animal called Sālāvṛka meaning wild dogs or hyenas which were regarded as most treacherous and ferocious animals. Hence the heavenly nymph Urvaśī says to king Pururavā—'Indeed, there can be no friendship with women for their hearts are like hyenas.'[12] Wild beasts of prey often created

Various animals.

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8. S.B. 6-2-1-18—'Puruṣo hi prathamaḥ paśūnāmathāśvaṃ puruṣaṃ hi anvaśvo'tha gāmaśvaṃ hi anugauḥ,.....Aviṃhi anvajaḥ.'

9. S.B. 6-1-1-11—'Yadarasadiva sa rāsavo'bhavat.'

10. S.B. 3-1-3-4—'Tasya (Puruṣasyaṭ yāni maṃsāni saṃkṛtya saṃnyāsustate hastī samabhavat tasmādahurna hastinaṃ pratigṛhnīyāt'.

11. S.B. 12-7-1-8—'Vyāghra ārapyānāṃ paśūnāṃ rājā, simha āraṇyānāṃ paśūnamīśaḥ.'

12. S.B. 11-5-1-9—'Na vai straiṇāni sakhyāni santi sālāvṛkānāṃ hṛdayāni te.'

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havoc in the villages. The S.B. refers to sacrificial 'cow being killed by a tiger'.[13] We have seen that the tiger is termed king (rājā) of beasts whereas the lion is called lord (Iśaḥ) of beasts. This proves the superiority of the lion to the tiger as if the lion is the paramount sovereign whereas the tiger is the king under the former. In point of nobility also the lion is superior to the tiger. The tiger is a symbol of cruelty and rapacity ; it is veritable death. The T.B. compares the tiger with Death. 'The tiger is the expression of Death.'[14]

Just as animals are classified under two heads—those having single row of teeth and those having double rows, likewise they are also classified as one-hoofed species and cleft-hoofed species.

Varieties of serpents.

Both the Brāhmanas A.B. and S.B. mention various types of serpents and reptiles. A.B. 3-13-2 mentions Nirdaṃśī snakes devoid of the power of biting, svaja or double-headed snake, Manthāvala or snakes residing in trees and dangling from the branches, Andha sarpa or blind snake and Gaṇḍūpada which is explained by Sāyaṇa to be a reptile resembling a serpent. A.B. 3-14-5 refers to a peculiar variety of snake called śākala 'which moves about catching its tail by its mouth thereby forming a complete circle or ring so that one fails to distinguish its head from the tail'.[15] The S.B. also mentions several varieties of snake. Terrific huge serpent with eyes resembling livid embers of fire and yawning jaw is called Jambhayantaḥ Ahiḥ which Eggeling translates as 'dragon' (5-1-5-22) ; 11-5-5-8 mentions huge snakes (Mahā-ahi) residing in lakes, i.e., aquatic snakes of immense sizes ; 7-4-1-29 offers homage to all sorts of snakes and serpent residing in trees, forests, water—both the biting and the non-biting varieties. The V.S. (24-35) and the P.B. (9-2-14) mention the 'Godhā' which means an iguana. The name also occurs in the J.B. (1-221). Ludwig, Zimmer and Roth take it to be a big lizard. An iguana is indeed a macrocosm of the lizard. Kṛkalāsa or chameleon has

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13. 11-8-4-1—'Samrād-dughāṃ śārdulo jaghāna.'

14. T.B. 1-7-8-1—'Mṛtyorvā eṣa varṇaḥ yacchārdūlaḥ.'

15. 'Śākalanāmā ahiviśeṣaḥ ; sa ca sarpaṇakāle mukhena pucchasya daṃśanaṃ kṛtvā valayākāro bhavati tatra kiṃ mukhaṃ kiṃ vā pucchamiti na jñāyate.' (Sāyaṇa).

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been mentioned in both the T.S. and the V.S. as one of the victims at the horse sacrifice. The J.B. (1-221) mentions a Kṛkalāsī or she-chameleon.

Birds.

Now we come to the discussion of the winged creation, 'the fowls of the air' as the Bible calls them. Bird is variously termed in the Br. texts—each designation having a bearing on one or other of its characteristic marks. It is called 'Pakṣī' as it possesses wings. 'Vihaṅga as it flies in the sky, Suparṇa because of its graceful flight, etc. The ancients took interest in the natural sciences like botany and zoology. They observed the characteristics of the vegetable kingdom and manners of animals. As to how birds fly the S.B., remarks—'Birds can only fly up when they contract their wings and spread out their feathers.'[16] Eagle or falcon is called the king of birds.[17] The S.B. mentions Haṃsa or swan (6-7-3-11), Kalaviṅka or sparrow (1-6-3-4), Tittiri or partridge (1-6-3-5), Vāja or eagle, and kapiñjala called Hazel cockatoo or francoline partridge (1-6-33, also 13-5-1-13). Both the A.B. and S.B. mention Śyena or falcon, and refer to the birds as a class by such terms as Suparṇa, Śakuni etc., Kṛkavāku, one of the several Sanskrit synonyms of the cock occurs in the A.V. (5-31-2) and the V.S. (24-35). While commenting on the term in the V.S. Mahīdhara calls the bird 'tāmracūḍa' i.e., red-crested. In the Nirukta (12-3) Yāska classes the term Kṛkavāku with the onomatopoetic words where sound echoes the sense. Indeed 'Kṛ-ka-vā-ku' bears a close affinity to the crowing of the cock like the English word 'cock-a-doodle-doo'.

Insects.

Among insects mention is made of bees and ants in the S.B. Ant is called Upajihvikā (6-6-3-6) ; both red ants and white ants are mentioned. In the forest schools, in the villages bordering on forests the bees and beehives were a common sight that met everyone's eyes in that age. Hence we often find instructions are offered drawing analogy from the

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16. 10-2-1-1—'Vayāṃsi yadaiva pakṣā upasamūhante yadā patrāṇi visṛjante'thot-patituṃ śaknuvanti.'

17. S.B. 12-7-1-6—'Śyeno vayasāṃ rājā.'

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bees in the Brāhmaṇas and Upaniṣads as well. In the famous metaphysical discourses on the nature of the supreme Reality delivered by sage Āruṇi to Śvetaketu, in the sixth chapter of Chāndogya Upaniṣad one discourse is based on the simile of bees and beehives. The S.B. mentions bees by way of simile. 'Just as bees reach honey, so the sacrificers reach sacrifice.'[18]

Bees.

18. 3-4-3-14—'Yathā madhu madhukṛta āpayāyayeyurevamevaitad yajñamāpyā-yanti (ṛtvijaḥ).'

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BOOK IV

CHAPTER II

Calendar :

In the Brāhmaṇas we find the details of the Aryan calendar that was observed in the later Vedic age. The number of days, months and half-months of the year, the seasons and their effects, the commencement and termination of the year, even the total number of Muhūrtas of the year are met with in these texts. The sacrifice is often compared with the year with reference to its number of days, months and weeks. The expression 'sacrifice is the same thing as year', (yajño vai saṃvatsaraḥ) occurs repeatedly in the Br. texts. The performance of the longest sessional sacrifice or satra known as Gavāmayana covered 361 days or a complete year. The rites performed in the first 180 days were performed in the reverse order in the last 180 days. Thus the first 180 days covered six months and the last ones covered another term of six months. The Viṣuva day intervened between these pair of six months. Every six days completed one rite called Ṣaḍaha which literally means a collection of six days. Thus each ṣaḍaha stood for a week and five ṣaḍahas made up thirty days or a complete month. Hence sacrifices served two purposes—viz, the ritualistic or liturgical purpose and maintaining the calendar. Observes the S.B.—'The sacrifice is of equal measure with the year ; he offers five libations for sacrifice in commensurate with the year and there are five seasons in a year.'[1] Six seasons are mentioned in the Br. texts viz, summer, rains, autumn, Hemanta or the dewy season, winter and spring. But often it is said, 'there are five seasons' 'Hemanta and winter are considered as one season when the number of seasons is given as five', says Sāyaṇa.[2]

Sacrifice embodying the then calendar.

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1. S.B. 3-1-3-17—'Saṃvatsara sammito vai yajñaḥ ; pañca vā ṛtavaḥ saṃvatsarasya tat pañcabhirāpnoti tasmāt pañca kṛtvā ānakti.'
2. 'Pañca ṛtavo hemanta-śiśirayoḥsamāsena.'

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The year or annual calendar consisted of 360 days. 'There are 360 days in a year.'[3] There were twelve months in a year but sometimes the year is referred to as consisting of thirteen months. On the surface this statement of thirteen months may seem to be a contradiction but on sifting the statement becomes clear. The reason is not far to seek. The year consisted of 360 days and not 365 days ; thus year each fell short of five days which accumulated in six years to an intercalary month of 35 days. Thus every sixth year, the annual calendar had an additional month or intercalary month of 35 days making thirteen months in all. 'The year consists of 360 days ; and what thirty-five there are they are the (intercalary) thirteenth month.'[4] Except six years' period of intercalation, a year, as usual, consisted of twelve months.[5]

Number of days in a year.

Intercalary month.

'The śatarudrīya sacrifice consists of 360 formulas, and other 30, and 35. Of these 360 corresponds to the 360 days of the year, 30 corresponds to the thirty nights of a month, and 35 refers to the thirteenth (intercalary) month', says the S.B.[6] The intercalary month is sometimes said to consist of 35 days, sometimes of 36 days. Not only the days of a sacrifice but also the bricks of the fire-altar are compared to the days of the year and the month. Thus in the construction of the fire-altar, observes S.B. 10-4-3—'there are 360 yajuṣmati' bricks, and 36 to be laid thereunto corresponding to the 360 days of the year and 36 days of the intercalary month'.

Enumeration of days, months, fortnights of a year.

There are thirty nights in a month[7] and fifteen nights in a half-

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3. A.B. 2-7-7—'Trīṇī ca vai śatāni ṣaṣṭiśca saṃvatsarasyāhāni.'
S.B. 1-3-5-9—'Trīṇi ca śatāni ṣaṣṭiśca saṃvatsarasyāhāni.'

4. S.B. 9-3-3-18—'Saṣṭiśca trīṇi śatāni tāvanti saṃvatsarasyāhāni ; yāni pañcatriṃśat sa trayodaśo māsaḥ.'

5. S.B. 1-3-5-10—'Dvādaśa vai māsāḥ saṃvatsarasya.'

6. S.B. 9-1-1-43—'Saṣṭiśca ha vai trāṇi ca śatānyetat śatarudrīyamatha.....tadubhayāni saṃvatsarasyāhorātrāṇyāpnoti.'

7. A.B. 3-14-3—'Triṃśat māsasya rātrayaḥ.'

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month[8] and twenty-four half months in a year.[9] Even the days and nights of a month have been enumerated in S.B. ; 'there are sixty days and nights taken together in a month ;[10] i.e., there are thirty days and thirty nights in a month. The total number of full moons and new moons that recur within a term of fifteen years are also recorded. 'In fifteen years there are 360 full moons and new moons.'[11] Not to speak of months, weeks, days and nights, even the total number of Muhūrtas has been recorded in S.B. 10-4-3-20 which reads as follows—'There are ten thousand and eight hundred Muhūrtas in a year.'[12] Ten thousand and eight hundred bricks of the fire-altar have been compared to these Muhūrtas.

Number of Muhūrtas in a year.

The clock-like regularity in which the years, months, days, seasons and astral bodies revolve and function attracted the attention of the Vedic Aryans. The day and night are conceived as the two wheels of the year which goes on like a chariot. Says the A.B.—'The day and night —these two are the two wheels of the chariot-like year because on these two the year revolves.'[13] The S.B. goes a step farther and states, 'The year, in fact, is nothing but days and nights since these two revolving produce it.'[14] 'The days and nights of the year revolve in an uninterrupted unbroken continuity.'[15] Again, the sun is mainly responsible for

Days and nights, two wheels of the year.

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8. S.B. 1-3-5-8—'Pañcadaśa vā ardhamāsasya rātrayaḥ.'

9. S.B. 3-4-4-20 ; 8-3-3-11 ; 2-2-2-5—'Caturviṃśati vai saṃvatsarasya ardhamāsāḥ.'

10. 10-2-6-1—'Saṣṭirmāsasyāhorātrāṇi.'

11. S.B. 11-1-2-10—'Pañcadaśānāṃ varṣānāṃ trīṇi ca śatāni ṣaṣṭiśca paurṇamāsyaśca amāvasyāśca.'

12. 'Daśa ca sahasrāṇi aṣṭau ca śatāni bhavanti etāvanto hi saṃvatsarasya muhūrtāḥ.'

13. 5-25-5—'Ete ha vai saṃvatsarasya cakre yadahorātre tābhyāmeva tatsaṃvatsarameti.'

14. 3-2-2-4—'Ahorātre vai saṃvatsaraḥ ete hyenaṃ pariplavamāne kurutaḥ.'

15. S.B. 1-3-5-16—'Saṃvatsarasyāhorātrāṇi santatāni avyavacchinnāni pariplavante.'

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the creation of days and nights. The apparent rising of the sun marks the day and its apparent setting marks the evening. 'The sun knits together the days and nights ; hence he is called close-knit.'[16]

The moon is the creator of months and half-months. The two fortnights of a month are due to the gradual waning and waxing of the lunar digit. 'The moon waxes during fifteen days and wanes during fifteen days'.[17] The complete disappearance of the moon is called Amāvasyā, and the night when the moon shines with all her digits complete is known as Paurṇamāsī or full-moon ; the first appearance of the moon after Amāvasyā is called new moon. 'The moon', says, the A.B., 'enters into the sun during Amāvasyā and hence disappears completely'.[18]

Waxing and waning of the moon.

In the Soma-yāga the Soma creeper had to be pressed thrice daily for the three libations of Soma-juice to be offered in the morning, at midday, and at dusk. Thus the juice of the Soma creeper was thrice extracted daily and these three pressings, extractions, were termed Prātaḥsavana or morning extraction, Mādhyandina savana or midday pressing and Tṛtīya savana respectively. These three extractions marked 'the beginning, hey-day and termination of the day as well' known as Tri-sandhyā or three junctures of the day.

Parallelism between sacrifice and calendar.

Now we shall take up the discussion of seasons as stated in the Brāhmaṇas concerned. There are six seasons and they come down to five when the dewy season, Hemanta and the winter, śīta or śiśira are taken together. 'Two months make one season.'[19] The names of the six seasons are as follows—Grīṣma, Varṣā, Śarat, Hemanta,

Seasons enumerated.

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16. S.B. 9-4-1-8—'Asau vādityaḥ saṃhitā, eṣa hi ahorātre sandadhāti.'

17. S.B. 8-4-1-10—'Candramā..... pañcadaśāhāni apūryate, pañcadaśāpakṣīyate.'

18. A.B. 8-40-5—'Candramā vāmāvasyāyāmādityamanupraviśati so'ntardhīyate.'

19. S.B. 8-4-2-14—'Dvau hi māsau ṛtuḥ.'

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Śiśira and Vasanta. Each season comprises two months and the names of each pair of months corresponding to each season have been thus enumerated in the S.B.[20]; Madhu and Mādhava are the two months of the spring season (Vasanta); śukra and śuci are the two months of the summer season; Nabha and Nabhasya are the two rainy months; Iśa and Ūrja are the two Autumn months; Hemanta comprises the two months of Saha and Sahasya; the Winter season or Śiśira comprises the two months of Tapaḥ and Tapasya. Due to its heat the summer is compared with the vigour of the Kṣatriya, and on account of its congenial atmosphere the spring is compared to the benign influence of the Brāhmaṇas. Hence 'the summer is called the season of the Kṣatriya,'[21] and 'the spring iscalledthe seasonof the Brāhmaṇa.'[22] The rainy season is said to comprise all the seasons with its different aspects of natural phenomena such as gale, thunder, lightning, shower and cessation of shower. 'The rainy season comprises all the seasons. When it blows from the east, it characterizes the spring; when it thunders, it bespeaks summer; when it rains it characterizes the rainy season; its lightning is a mark of the autumn and when it ceases to rain, it bespeaks winter.'[23] While enumerating the seasons the spring or Vasanta is always mentioned first and correspondingly in the list of months the Madhu or Phālguna comes first in the S.B. and A.B. It is evident from this enumeration or order of succession that in the later Vedic age the year commenced with the spring season and the month of Phālguna. In the month of Phālguna the moon is in conjunction with the nakṣatra of the Uttaraphālguni. Hence the full moon of the Phālguna marked the commencement of the year whereas the first Phālguna marked the termination of the year; hence the K.B. calls the former the month and the latter the tail of the year. The S.B. also

The commencement and termination of the year.

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20. Vide S.B. 4-3-1-13 to 4-3-1-19.

21. S.B. 13-4-1-2—'Grīṣmo vai Kṣatriyasyartuḥ.'

22. S.B. 13-4-1-3—'Vasanto vai Brāhmaṇasyartuḥ.'

23. S.B. 2-2-3-8—'Varsā vai sarva ṛtavaḥ. Yadeva purastāt vāti tad vasantasya rūpaṃ yat stanayati tat Grīṣmasya, yad varṣati tad varṣāṇam, yad vidyotate tat Śaradah,.....yad vṛstvodgṛhnāti tad hemantasyeti.'

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observes—'The full moon of Phālguna, that is the second one is the first night of the year ; and that (first) one is the last (night of the year).[24] The T.B. and the K.B. also confirm the statement of the S.B. that the full moon of the Phālguna marks the commencement of the year.[25] The G.B. also states, 'The Uttarā and Pūrvā Phālgunī are respectively the beginning and the end of the year ; just as the two ends of a thing meet together so these two ends of the year meet together.[26]

Astronomy :

A perusal of Brs. prove beyond doubt that the Vedic Aryans knew the fact that the earth is round and the movement of the sun is only apparent, not true ; the sun is stationary. The following Br. texts will bear out this contention. 'This universe is round', observes the S.B.[27] The term 'Parimaṇḍala' means 'round' and 'Lokaḥ' means the earth.

Several Brs. state in clear and unmistakable terms that the sun never rises and never sets ; he is like a great eye in the blue firmament that keeps watch for ever, and never blinks. Observes the A.B.—'This Āditya (the sun) never sets and never rises. When one thinks him to have set, actually he creates night in that part and day in the other part (of the globe) at that time. When in the morning one regards the sun to have risen, in reality he terminates the night and creates day in that part ; the other part being enveloped in night at that time. This sun never sets'.[28]

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24. S.B. 6-2-2-18—E'ṣā ha saṃvatsarasya prathamā rātriryat phālguni paurṇamāṣī yottaraiṣottamā yā pūrvā mukhataḥ eva tat saṃvatsaramārabhate.'

25. T.B. 1-1-2-8—'Eṣā vai jaghanyā rātriḥ saṃvatsarasya yat pūrve phālgunī ; eṣā vai prathamā rātriḥ saṃvatsarasya yaduttare phālgunī.'

K.B. 4-4—'Mukhaṃ vā etat saṃvatsarasya yat phālgunī paurṇamāsī.'

26. G.B. 1-19—'Mukhamuttare phālgunyau pucchaṃ pūrve. Tad yathā pravṛttasyāntau sametau syātāmevametat saṃvatsarasyāntau sametau bhavataḥ.'

27. 7-1-1-37—'Parimaṇḍala u vā ayaṃ lokaḥ.'

28. 3-14—'Sa vā eṣa (Adityaḥ) na kadācanāstameti nodeti taṃ yadastametīti manyate'hna eva.....aharevādhastāt kurute, rātriṃ parastāt sa vā eṣa na kadācana nimrocati.'

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The G.B. also makes the selfsame observation with slight variation of words.[29] These passages clearly prove that the Aryans were conversant with the astronomical truth that the earth revolves whereas the sun remains stationary, that the movement of the sun is only apparent and not true and the revolution of the earth causes day and night. The sun does never set, nor does it rise. This stationary character of the sun shining alone and for ever is all the more emphasised in the Chāndogya Brāhmaṇa which reads as follows ; —'The sun never rises ; never sets ; he stays all alone in the middle. This śloka is heard in this connection viz,—the sun does never set nor rise.'[30] Here the term 'Sthātā' has been used to signify the stationary character of the sun. The word is derived from the root 'Sthā' which means 'cessation of physical movement.'[31] Referring to this perennial watchfulness of the sun that knows no setting or rest the A.B. remarks—'See the greatness of the sun-god who is ever vigilant and never sleeps while discharging his duty.'[32]

Important observation of the A.B. K.B., and G.B. regarding the solar science.

The sun does not rotate, it neither rises nor sets.

The Vedic Aryans were conversant with the fact that there are many worlds in this vast universe like the solar region, the lunar world and the worlds belonging to different planets such as Jupiter, Mars etc. They came to the conclusion that the terrestrial world or the earth is the smallest in size in comparison with the other worlds. 'Worlds above are graded according to their vastness and expanse and our earth is the smallest of all worlds', observes the A.B.[33]

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29. 2-4-10—'Sa vā eṣa na kadācanāstamayati, nodayayati. Tad yadenaṃ purastāt.....udayatīti manyante, rātrereva tadantaṃ gatvā .....na ha vai kadācana nimrocati.'

30. 5-31-1, 2, 3—'Naivodetā nāstametā, ekala eva madhye sthātā. Tadeṣa ślokaḥ'—

Na ha vai tatra nimlocati nodiyāya kadācana.'

Na ha vā asmā udeti, nimlocati.

31. 'Ṣṭhā gatinivṛttau.'

32. 7-33-3—'Sūryasya paśya śremānaṃ yo na tandrayate caran.'

33. 1-4-8—'Parovarīyāṃso vā ime lokā arvāk aṃhīyāṃsaḥ parastādarvācīrupasadaḥ.'

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Stars :

The Saṃhitās and the Brs. mention the Nakṣatras in the sense of 'stars' or stellar bodies. The sun, the moon and the nakṣatras are often mentioned together. The term 'Nakṣatra' is sometimes used in the sense of 'lunar mansion' as well as the conjunction of the moon and the star (nakṣatra) is described in terms of wedlock. The lunar mansion is termed' 'Raśi' in Indian Astronomy. The T.B. mentions 24 (twenty-four) nakṣatras viz,—Kṛttikās, Invakās, Bāhū (dual number), Tiṣya, Āśleṣās, Maghās, Pūrve Phālgunī, Hasta, Citrā, Niṣṭyā, Viśākhe, Anurādhās, Rohiṇī, Mūlabarahaṇī, Pūrvā Aṣāḍhās, Uttarā Aṣāḍhās, Śroṇā, Śraviṣṭhās, Śatabhiṣaj, Pūrve Proṣṭhapadās, Uttare Proṣṭhapadās, Revatī, Aśvayujan, Apabharaṇīs. This list swells to 30 (thirty) in the 3-1-4 of the same Br. including the full moon and the new moon. Thus an attempt is made to harmonize the Nakṣatra or lunar month with the Sāvana or solar month of thirty days. The T.S., the M.S. and the K.S. each mentions 28 nakṣatras with slight variation in terminology.

On stars.

Gradual discovery of stars.

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BOOK IV

CHAPTER III

The Language & Literature Of the Brāhmaṇas :

The language of the Brs. is the first instance of Indo-European prose. The language is simple, lucid and unadorned ; often it assumes a popular conversational tone. In the early Brs. such as the A.B., K.B., P.B., etc., the diction is simple and not so developed but there is an easy flow and spontaneity that takes the reader into confidence. In the later Brs., particularly in the S.B. and the J.B. a fully developed literary style is met with which reaches culmination in the mellifluous rhythmic prose of Upaniṣads. The language of the Brs. in general is characterised by an even rhythm and has a beauty of its own. It is, in the words of Eggeling, a reputed western Indologist, 'the only genuine prose works which the Sanskrit as a popular language, has produced.'[1] The Brs. present a rich literature whose importance can never be overestimated. Apart from their contents the contribution of the Brs. to the field of Sanskrit literature and linguistics is vast, varied and worth its weight in gold. Besides their own language and literature the Brs. record important observations on speech and refer to various types of literature which form an interesting item of study and will be taken up in our next two topics for discussion—'Observations of the Brs. on speech' and 'Types of literature referred to in the Brs.'

The language of the Brs.

In the following lines we shall make certain observations regarding some linguistic peculiarities of the Brs. As a rule, the language of the Brs. is systematic and homogeneous. Every Brs. has its minute linguistic peculiarities.

(*i*) All the Brs. except the S.B. and the T.B. are characterised by the absence of accent. There are only two accents in the S.B.

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1. 'The Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa', part XII, page XXV.

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viz, the acute (Udātta) and grave (Anudātta) whereas the T.B. possesses all the three accents.

(*ii*) The language of all the Brs. teems with such particles as ha, vā, vai, vāva, u, eva etc. : Sometimes four or five such particles follow one another in an unbroken chain without any intervening word. This linguistic factor persists in the Upaniṣads as well.

(*iii*) The Instrumental plural form of stems ending in 'a', e.g., 'stomebhiḥ' for 'stomaiḥ' (A.B. 4-15-1). In another form of the Instrumental, the stem remains unchanged, e.g., Jagat-Kāmyā (A.B. 6-15). The P.B. has the peculiar instrumental form 'aharbhis' in place of the regular form 'ahobhis'.

(*iv*) The ablative and genitive forms of stems ending in 'ā', are found to end in both the normal 'āḥ' as also in 'ai', e.g., in the genitive 'apūtāyai' (A.B. 7-27), and 'Pathyāyāḥ' (A.B. 1-9). In the ablative we have such forms as 'jīrṇāyai' (K.B. 38-7), 'vidyāyai' (K.B. 6-10).

(*v*) The 'an' stems very often occur without any ending in the locative singular in the R.V. e.g., 'Parame Vyoman' etc., and also in the A.V. but not so in the Brs. except the two words 'Ātman' and 'Ahan' which do not change their form. The usual regular forms 'dhāmani', 'samani', 'ahni', 'ahani' are also met with in the Brs.

(*vi*) The stems ending in 'is' and 'us' show transitions to stems in 'i' and 'u' and in 'isa' and 'uṣa'. From 'janūs' is once made the nominative singular 'janūs', after the manner of 'as'—stem in the R.V. The S.B. has the form 'janūrvāsas'.

(*vii*) First traces of gerunds in 'am' are already met with in the R.V., but they are quite common in the Brs.

(*viii*) The suffix 'uka' with the sense of a present participle is a marked characteristic of the language of the Brs. e.g. — 'Rājā bāhuvalī bhāvukaḥ' (S.B. 13-2-2-5), 'Rūpinī jāyā priyā bhavukā' etc.

(ix) Use of imperative 'Lot'—endings ; Use of 'tāt' as an imperative ending of the second person, e.g., Nidhattāt, gamayatāt, anvasṛjatāt, kṛṇutāt, etc., in the A.B. form 'kṛṇutāt is frequently met with in connection with the dissection of the slaughtered animal's body. In the second person plural we have the form 'śṛṇotana' in the A.B. 7-18-5.

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(*x*) In the classical Sanskrit the use of perfect (Lit) is barred in the first person by Pāṇini's rule, 'Parokṣe Lit', but in the Brs. we have examples of the Perfect tense (Lit) used in the first person as well, e.g., Śuśruma (A.B. 7-15).

(*xi*) Peculiar Aorist forms such as 'akarta' (A.B. 7-18-5) and 'adanśuḥ' (A.B. 7-17-3) are met with.

(*xii*) The use of 'rūpaṃ kṛ' in the sense of 'to become' is a peculiar feature of Br. Syntax. It means, 'to assume a changed form'. The original meaning of 'rūpa' was 'assumed form'. This usage is also met with in the T.S., e.g., 'kṛṣṇo rūpaṃ kṛtva' 'taking on a black form', i.e., assuming a shape for himself as one that is black.

With these observations on the literature and language of the Brs. we shall now pass on to the more important topic, 'Observations of the Brs. on speech' and 'Types of Literature referred to in the Brs.' Originality may be claimed for both these topics.

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BOOK IV

MISCELLANEOUS

CHAPTER III

Observations of the Brs. on Speech :

The Brs. have classified speech (Vāk) into three varieties, viz, the divine, the human and the demoniac. The divine is termed Daivī Vāk, the human Manuṣī Vāk and demoniac the Rākṣasī Vāk. The divine or Daivī Vāk is met with in the sacred lore, i.e., the Veda. The gods also speak in this language. 'Vāk or speech is expressed in three ways, the ṚK verses, the Yajuṣ texts and the Sāman hymns.'[1] Differentiating the divine speech from the human speech the S.B. observes that the Vedic verses uttered in the sacrifice represent the divine speech whereas the words other than Vedic terms exchanged between the priests represent the human speech, Mānūsī Vāk. Thus the words uttered by the priest such as, 'Do ye this ! do that !' etc., are human speech.[2] The language of an excited person or a lunatic is an illustration of the Rākṣasī Vak.[3] The human speech is characterised by flawlessness and unfaltering accents. Hence faltering speech is differentiated from the human speech. 'He speaks the faltering speech and not the unfaltering even human speech.[4]

Three types of speech, divine, human and demoniac.

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1. S.B. 6-5-3-4—'Tredhā vinitā hi vāk ṛco yajūṃṣi sāmāni.'
   S.B. 10-5-1-2—'Sā vā eṣa vāk tredhā vihitā, ṛco yajūṃṣi sāmāni.'
2. 10-5-1-1—'Vācā hi cīyate ṛca yajuṣā sāmneti nu daivyātha yanmanuṣya vācā-hetīdaṃ kuruta idaṃ kuruteti.'
3. A.B. 2-1-7—'Yāṃ vai dṛpto vadati, yāmunmattaḥ, sā vai ṛākṣasi vāk.'
4. S.B. 3-2-2-27—'Parihvālaṃ vācaṃ vadati, na mānuṣīṃ prasṛtām.'

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Articulate and inarticulate sound.

In a noteworthy passage of the S.B., articulate human speech is distinguished from inarticulate sound of beasts, birds and reptiles. The articulate sound of human beings is called 'Niruktam' and the inarticulate sound of beasts, 'Aniruktam.'[5]

Vāk has been identified with Sarasvatī in almost all the Brs. 'Vāk is Sarasvatī', says the S.B.[6] 'Verily, Vāk is Sarasvatī, declare the A.B., K.B., and P.B.[7] Pathyā Svasti is another name of Vāk.[8] Hence the terms Vāk, Sarasvatī and Pathyā Svasti are identical in sense. The speech of the Northern India, particularly of the region known as Kuru-Pañcāla has been eulogised as the best speech and hence that region is described as the resort of Pathyā Svasti. Observes the S.B.—'Pure speech (Pathyā Svasti) discerned the northern direction ; hence the peoples of Kuru-Pañcālas speak the pure language.'[9] The K.B. remarks, —'Pathyā Svasti (Vāk) discerned the northern quarters ; hence speech is uttered with wisdom and discretion in the northern region ; this is why people go to that region to learn pure speech and he who comes back therefrom is honoured ; people hearken to him.'[10]

North India as the home of pure speech.

The Brs. mention the intimate relation that exists between the mind and speech. The authors of the Brs. correctly realise the fact that the mind is the essential factor that guides the other sense-organs, that speech is impossible without the co-operation of the mind. 'Speech is preceded by the mind because, speech expresses what is comprehended by the mind,' observes the

Relation between mind & speech.

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5. 4-1-3-16—'Vāco niruktaṃ yanmanuṣyā vadanti..... aniruktaṃ yat paśavo vadanti, anīruktaṃ yad vayāṃsi vadanti..... aniruktaṃ yadidaṃ kṣudraṃ sarisṛpaṃ vadati.'

6. 7-5-1-31—'Vāk Sarasvatī.'

7. A.B. 3-3-13 ; K.B. 5-2 ; P.B. 6-7-7—'Vāg vai Sarasvatī.'

8. K.B. 7-6 ; S.B. 3-2-3-8—'Vāg vai Pathyā Svasti.'

9. 3-2-3-15—'Udīcīmeva diśaṃ. Pathayā Svastyā prājānāṃstasmādatrottarā hi vāg vadati kurupañcālatrā.'

10. 7-6—'Sā (Pathyā Svastiḥ) udīcīṃ diśaṃ prājānāt, tasmādudīcyāṃ diśi prajñatatarā vāgudyata ; udañca u eva yanti vācaṃ śikṣituṃ yo vā tata āgacchanti tasya vā śuśrūṣanta iti.'

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P.B.[11] The sphere of speech or language is smaller than that of the mind. 'Mind is, as it were, unlimited, speech is limited.[12] Hence 'speech is less comprehensive than mind.'[13] Mind, again, has no power of verbal expression of its own ; it expresses itself through the medium of speech. Thus, speech is the channel through which mind finds an outlet. This is why the speech (Vāk) is described as 'the canal of the mind.'[14] The close and inseparable relation between the mind and sound is a well-established psychological truth with which the Vedic Aryans were conversant.

Potentiality of speech.

Speech has been compared with a wish-yielding milch cow (Kāmadhenu) that gives milk at any hour of the day and night whenever she is milked ; that is to say, any quantity of milk can be obtained from her. Likewise any number of words can be framed from the letters or alphabets, and any number of phrases and sentences from the words. Thus, 'Speech is Śabalī, i.e., wish-yielding milch cow.'[15]

Truth and falsehood as two aspects of speech.

The A.B. likens truth and falsehood, i.e., true and false statements to the two breasts of speech. Just as the breasts of a mother may simultaneously nurture both a good and a bad child, similarly, speech may feed both truth and falsehood ; both true words and false words owe their existence to speech. 'Speech has two breasts ; they are truth and falsehood.'[16] Thus Vāk or speech may represent both the truth and untruth.

Speech is identified with Brahman in the senses of both the

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11. 1-1-1-3—'Mano ha pūrvaṃ vāco yaddhi manasādhigacchati tad vācā vadati.'
12. S.B. 1-4-4-7—'Aparimitatarāmiva hi manaḥ parimita-tareva hi vāk.'
13. S.B. ibid.—'Vāg vai manasaḥ hrasīyasī.'
14. J.B. (U) 1-58-3—'Tasya (manasah) eṣā kulyā yad vāk.'
15. P.B. 21-3-1, 'Vāg vai śavalī.'
16. A.B. 4-1-1—'Vāco yāva dvou stanau, satyānṛte vāva te.'

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Veda and the Supreme Godhead. The Absolute Brahman finds expression in language ; in that capacity Vāk is regarded as Eternal Verbum, the symbol of Godhead just as the holy syllable Om is regarded as the symbol of the Absolute Godhead. Like the Veda, the sacrifice is also identified with speech as it consists of sacrificial formulae, Sāma chants, mantras and injunctions of the different priests. Hence the S.B., A.B., P.B., etc., identify Vāk with the sacrifice, yajña. As the god Bṛhaspati is the lord of speech, Vāk is identified with this deity as well.

Speech identified with Brahman, Yajña, Bṛhaspati etc.

The variations of the same term caused by regional influences are also recorded in the Brs. The S.B. takes note of this linguistic truth and illustrates it with reference to the variations of the synonyms of the term 'Agni' according to different regions of the then India. 'Agni' is the deity ; he has the following synonyms ; the people of the eastern region call him by the term 'Śarva' ; the Bahikas (people of the Bahika region) term him 'Bhaba' etc.

Variations of a word due to regional influences.

Types Of Literature mentioned In The Brs. :

Various types of literature have been mentioned in the Brāhmaṇas as follows :—

(*i*) *Trayī Vidyā* :

The three Vedas, viz, ṚK, Sāman and Yajus have been clearly mentioned in all the Brs. Sometimes the A.V. is also included in the import of this term 'vidyā (knowledge) which is tripartite in form, viz, the ṚK verses, the Yajus formulae and the Sāma hymns'[17]. 'The gods salvaged the triple knowledge, par excellence, from the ocean of the mind by means of the shovel of speech'.[18] The S.B. 11-5-6 mentions the four Vedas, the R.V.,

Emergence of the three Vedas.

17. S.B. 4-6-7-1—'Trayī vai vidyā ṛco yajūṃṣi sāmāni.'

18. S.B. 7-5-2-52—'Manaso vai samudrād vācābhrayā devāstrayīṃ vidyāṃ nirakhanan.'

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The Y. V. and S.V. and A. V. as the sacred lore included in the syllabus of study and compares them with the milk-offerings, butter-offerings, soma-offerings and fat-offerings to the gods respectively connected with the sessional sacrifice, viz, the Vedic study termed Brahma-Yajña. In a noteworthy passage of the S.B.[19], the number of syllables of each Veda has been recorded. According to this observation of the S.B. the Ṛgveda consists of 432,000 syllables, and the Y.V. and the S.V. jointly consist of 432,000 syllables. 'Thus the three Vedas jointly consist of 864,000 syllables.'[20]

Sanctity of Vedic study.

Number of syllables in the Vedas.

The S.B. ascribes the origin of the R.V. to god Agni, the Y.V. to god Vāyu and the S.V. to the Sun-god.[21] G.B. (P) 2-16 mentions the four Vedas, the R.V., the Y.V., S.V., and the Brahma-veda. By the term Brahma-veda the A.V. is meant. All the Brs. sing the glory of the Vedas and extol the efficacy derived from the study of the Vedas The S.B. and the G.B.(U) make the identical observation, 'The Sāman i.e., the S.V. is the essence, the flavour of all the Vedas.'[22] In the post-Vedic age Lord Kṛṣṇa declares in the Gītā, 'I am the S.V. amongst the Vedas.'[23]

Greatness of Sāmaveda.

The Brs. maintain that it is only through the Vedas that one can attain to the Supreme and suprasensuous knowledge. 'One ignorant of the Veda can never comprehend the Supreme Godhead, the Absolute', observes the T.B.[24]

Utility of Vedic study.

The G.B.(P) calls the 'Sāvitrī' hymn the mother of all the Vedas.[25]

The S.B. regards the Vedas as the breathings of the Supreme

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19. 10-4-2 (the whole of the Second Br.).

20. 10-4-2-25—'Te sarve trayo vedāḥ, daśa ca sahasrāṇyaṣṭau ca śatānyaśītīnām abhavan'. (10800 × 80 = 864000).

21. 11-5-8-3—'Agnerṛgvedo vāyoryajurvedaḥ, sūryāt sāmavedaḥ.'

22. S.B. 12-8-3-23 ; G.B. (U) 5-7—'Sarveṣāṃ vā eṣa vedānāṃ raso yat sāma.'

23. 10-22—'Vedānāṃ sāmavedo'smi.'

24. 3-12-9-7—'Nāvedavinmanute taṃ vṛhantam.'

25. 1-39—'Etāṃ vedānāṃ mātaraṃ Sāvitrīm.'

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Being. Just as the processes of respiration function involuntarily the Vedas also spontaneously emanated from the Supreme Being.

(*ii*) *Gāthā* :—

Couplets praising past deeds and glory of kings, priests and other human beings are called Gāthās and are met with in the Brs. Gāthās are synchronous with the R.V. in age according to some scholars. Some Gāthās occur in the eighth and ninth khaṇḍas of the thirty-ninth chapter of the eight Pañcikā of the A.B. The T.B. thus recounts the origination of Gāthā. Gods removed the unclean portion of the Veda ; 'that unclean portion of the Veda became Gāthā Nārāśaṃsī.'[26] Sāyaṇa thus explains the term 'Nārāśaṃsī' which is a qualifying adjective to Gāthā. ; 'The eulogy of kings, ministers etc., is called Narāśaṃsa and the couplets relating to such eulogy that can be put to tune are termed Nārāśaṃsī.'[27] The eulogy of famous kings who offered fabulous sums and princely presents to their officiating priests are recounted in the Gāthās contained in the A.B. referred to above.

(*iii*) *Anuśāsanāni.*

(*iv*) *Vidyā.*

(*v*) *Vākovākyam.*

(*vi*) *Itihāsa-purāṇam.*

(*vii*) *Anvākhyāna.*

The S.B. mentions these types of literature along with Gāthā-Nārāśaṃsī as the items of study prescribed for the syllabus concerning the study of the Veda. These terms have been explained under the caption 'Education' in Book I. The S.B. compares these items of Vedic study to sacrificial offerings, the study of the

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26. T.B. 1-3-6—'Yad brahmaṇaḥ śamalamāsīt sā gāthā nārāśaṃsyabhavat.'

27. 'Narāṇāṃ rājāmātyādīnāmāsamantāt praśaṃsanaṃ narāśaṃsastadviṣayā gīrnārāśaṃsī.'

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Veda being regarded as a lifelong satra or sacrificial session. These subjects of study are honey-offerings to the gods. Whosoever knowing this, studies daily the precepts (Anuśāsana), the sciences (Vidyā), the dialogue (Vākovākyam), the traditional myths and legends (Itihāsa-purāṇa) and the Nārāśaṃsī songs, for his lesson, satisfies the gods with honey-offerings.'[28]

Sāyaṇa splits up the word 'Itihāsa-purāṇa' into two separate words. By the term 'Itihāsa' he understands cosmological myths or accounts. He takes the term 'Purāṇa' to mean legends, stories of antiquity, and cites the love-episode of king Pururavas and the heavenly damsel Urvaśī as an illustration. This story occurs in the R.V. (X-95). Regarding this dialogue Macdonell observes—'A good deal of interest attaches to this myth, not only as the oldest Indo-European love-story, but as one which had a long history in Indian literature.'[29] The S.B. (11-5-9) has raised the fabric of this episode on the slender fibre of the Ṛgvedic story and has made it lively and of abiding interest. The tale of Duṣyanta and Śakuntalā also makes its first appearance in the S.B. Thus the S.B. supplies the kernel of two famous plays of the immortal poet Kalidāsa, Vikramorvaṣīyam and Abhijñāna-Śakuntalam. This Br. also recounts the tale of Manu and the fish connected with the great deluge. Manu once came across a small fish which requested him to rear it, and promised to save his life from the coming deluge that would inundate the whole universe. According to its suggestion Manu fashioned an ark and boarded the same with the onset of the deluge. The ark was finally guided to the Northern Mountain by the fish, to whose horn the ship was tied. Thus Manu's life was saved and he became the progenitor of mankind. The S.B. is thus a veritable mine of informations and noteworthy narratives and legends.

Episode of king Pururavā & Urvaśī.

Famous episodes and legends.

Legend of Manu & the fish.

The age-old story of Śunaḥ-śepa known as Śunaḥ-Śepā-

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28. 11-5-6-8—'Mahāhutayo ha vā etā (devānāṃ).....mahāhutibhireva taddevāstarpayati.'

29. A History of Sanskrit Literature, page 119.

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khyāna which has gained wide celebrity is narrated in the thirty-third chapter of the A.B. King Hariśchandra had hundred wives but no issue. He promised to sacrifice his son to Varuṇa if a son be born unto him with the god's boon. A son Rohita by name, was born but the king played Varuṇa false by deferring the sacrifice of his son on lame excuses. His plea did not hold water and Varuṇa punished him with the fatal disease dropsy. Hariścandra purchased the son of a poor famished Brahmin Ajīgarta by name in exchange for a hundred cows. Śunaḥ-Śepa, the second son of Ajīgarta was purchased to be the proxy of Rohita in the sacrifice. For another hundred cows Ajīgarta tied his own son to the stake as a victim of the sacrifice. For another hundred cows he offered to slaughter his own son. Śunaḥ-Śepa in order to escape death propitiated the gods Prajāpati, Agni, Savitṛ, Varuṇa, Viśvedevāḥ, Indra, Aśvinas and the goddess of dawn Uṣā respectively. As a result of his propitiation the thongs that held him fast to the stake became loose of their own accord and the victim was released. In the coronation ceremony of kings in the Rājasūya sacrifice the Hotṛ priest narrates the anecdote of Śunaḥ-Śepa as a convention.

The story of Śunaḥ-Śepa.

The 'Anvākhyāna' literally means a sequel to a story, an after-story. The word occurs in the S.B. and is used in two different senses. The subsequent portion of the book is sometimes termed Anvākhyāna ; sometimes it signifies a traditional story and partakes of the nature of Itihāsa partially.

Anvākhyāna.

(*viii*) *Accessories to Vedic Study* :—

The G.B. is the latest of all the Brs. and judged by its contents and language, appears to be synchronous with the Gṛhyasūtras and early Dharmasūtras. This Br. in a passage of its first part enumerates the list of accessories to the study and proper understanding of the Veda.[30] The list includes Kalpas, Rahasyas, Brs., Upaniṣads, Itihāsas, Anvākhyānas, Purāṇas, Svaras, Saṃskāras,

Various accessories to Vedic study.

30. G.B (P) 2-10—'Evamime sarve vedā nirmitāḥ sakalpāḥ sarahasyāḥ sabrāhmaṇāḥ sopaniṣatkāḥ setihāsāḥ sānvākhyānāḥ sapurāṇāḥ sasvarāḥ sasaṃskārāḥ saniruktāḥ sānuśāsanāḥ sānumārjanāḥ savākovākyāḥ.'

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Nirukta, Anuśāsana, Anumārjana and Vākovākya. The 'Kalpas' signify aphoristic literature dealing with rituals ; they are veritable manuals of sacrificial rites. The Kalpasūtras are divided into two classes, the Śrauta-sūtras and Gṛhyasūtras, the former dealing with Vedic rites and the latter with domestic rites. The 'Rahasyas' mean those portions of the Vedic literature which deal with social, political or spiritual matters that were confidentially discussed. Some scholars take this term to mean Āraṇyakas. The terms Brāhmaṇa and Upaniṣat have been explained in the introduction to this work. The terms Itihāsa and Purāṇa as well as the terms Anuśāsana and Vākovākyam have also been explained with illustrations in the foregoing pages. The Svaras refer to accents in particular and phonetics in general. The term 'Saṃskāra' has been explained as grammar by some as grammar chastens speech.

Beginnings of Etymology.

Both the phonetics and grammar represent two Vedāngas or accessories to the study of the Veda technically called, Śikṣā and Vyākaraṇa respectively. The Nirukta also is another Vedānga dealing mainly with etymology, linguistics and the Vedic pantheon as well. The Brs. mark the beginnings of etymological discussion which culminates in the Nirukta.

The Art of Debate :

Under 'Education we have shown that debating was a compulsory feature of education and it was a part of some rites and sacrifices. The campus of grand sacrifices such as the horse sacrifice and royal courts of famous kings who were patrons of learning like the saint king Janaka of Videha became regular centres of learning and witnessed many debates, theological disputations and metaphysical discourses. There existed a spirit of emulation and intolerance in these matters. The northern part of India was celebrated for purity of speech, and Brāhmaṇas of that region thought it to be very humiliating if they were defeated by the Brahmins of other regions. Many debates are recorded in the Brs. and the Upaniṣads, particularly in the S.B. and the B.U.

The Art of debate.

Vākovākyam, a form of debate.

The term 'Vākovākyam' originally meant dialogue ; later on it came to mean debate which consists in dialogue and witty retorts.

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The debate was called Brahmodya, Abhipraśna etc. In the post-Vedic age the terms Vidyā-vivāda, Vidyā-vicāra, Vitarka etc., meant debate. The Y.V. in general and the V.S. in particular mentions several technical terms signifying the prime mover, the opposer and the judge of a debating bout. Thus the term Praśnin means the prime mover, 'Abhipraśnin' means the opposer who puts counter questions, and the term 'Praśna-vivāka' stands for him who answers all the questions.

Designations of persons connected with debating.

This system of debate and disputation is the nucleus of the Indian logic. Logic or reason is the dominating factor in debates and discourses. In the course of study known as 'Vākovākyam' we may trace the origin of the Tarkaśāstra, the science and art of reasoning.

Maxims :

Many good sayings, maxims lie scattered like sparkling gems in the Brs. A few utterances are stated below as illustrations in point. Pride goeth before a fall. 'Too much pride is the cause of downfall', observes the S.B.[31] One should not take exception to the behaviour of a person favoured with divine grace ; remarks the A.B.[32] Regarding the quantity of food fit for human consumption the S.B. makes a wise observation ; 'Too much food harms the body while too little cannot sustain life ; food which is proportionate to the body nourishes life.'[33] Dilating on the utility of the wife, daughter and the son the A.B. remarks, 'A wife is a friend (partner), a daughter is the cause of sorrow, and a son is (like) a veritable luminary in the highest heaven'[34], i.e., to say, a son is the sun of life.

Maxims scattered like pearls in the Brs.

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31. 11-1-8-1—'Parābhavasya haitanmukhaṃ yadatimānaḥ.'

32. 5-24-3—'Mā śriyo vai vādiṣma.'

33. 10-4-1-14—'Yadu vā ātmasammitaṃ tadavati tanna hinasti, yad bhūyo hinasti tad yat kanīyo na tadavati.'

34. 7-33-1—'Sakhā ha jāyā, kṛpaṇaṃ hi duhitā jyotirhi putraḥ parame vyoman.'

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Allegory :

The Brs. abound with beautiful allegories which may be regarded as the kernel of the morality plays or allegorical dramas that evolved in the post-Vedic age. Under 'Eschatology' in Book III we have referred to an allegorical passage describing the mystic vision of Bhṛgu, son of Varuṇa. In one of his visions relating to the other world he meets two women ; one of them is beautiful while the other is superbly beautiful possessing bewitching charms. In the midst of these two graceful damsels stands a man of dark complexion with yellow eyes and repulsive features holding a staff in his hand. The beautiful maiden symbolises Belief and the damsel with captivating beauty and irresistible charms represents Unbelief. The black man with yellow eyes and foreboding features is a symbol of Wrath. By different rites connected with Agnihotra a sacrificer conquers belief, unbelief and wrath. This vision of Bhṛgu is recorded in the S.B. and the J.B. In his fifth vision as delineated in the J.B. Bhṛgu visits the region of the god Varuṇa where a beautiful vision awaits him. The panorama of the earth and sky, of the land and water bespeaks heavenly bliss and profound serenity. He finds five rivers where thousands of white and blue lotuses are blooming merrily amidst sparkling waves of honey, where the heavenly nymphs disport themselves and the whole atmosphere is charged with the sweet aroma that is constantly wafted from the lotuses and with the sound of music and dance that regale the ears and charm the eyes. This is an allegorical description of Varuṇaloka, a graphic pen-picture of the paradise. These flowers and rivers are symbolical. Besides these descriptions many symbolical rites connected with the sacrifice are allegorical in their import. The mystic fire-altar described in Book III under 'The Theory of Sacrifice' is highly allegorical ; every lair of the fire-altar, each design has an allegorical meaning. The purchase of Soma, the beating of the Śūdra or non-Aryan, the carrying away of the calf which symbolises speech etc., are examples of allegory.

Origin of allegorical dramas and morality plays.

Illustrations of allegory.

Thus the Brs. mark the beginnings of allegorical dramas and morality plays in Sanskrit literature.

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Drama :

Besides allegorical plays, drama in general is also foreshadowed in the Brs. as also in the Saṃhitā literature. Under 'The Forms of Sacrifice' in Book III we have shown how certain sacrifices involve dialogues that are dramatic in character. The dialogue hymns of the R.V. gather shape and become more dramatic in character in the Brs. The dialogue between king Pururavā and the celestial nymph Urvaśī recorded in the R.V. gains in bulk and clearly assumes a dramatic tone in the S.B.

Origin of drama.

From the above discussion we may safely conclude that the Brs. refer to multifarious forms of literature and it is a wonder that so many literary forms came into existence in the Vedic age which harks back to hoary antiquity.

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BOOK IV

CHAPTER IV.

Crimes and Ordeals :

In Book III, Chapter V under 'Emergence of popular religious cults' several varieties of crimes and criminals have been mentioned in connection with the evolution of the Rudra-Śiva-cult. The Śatarudrīya hymn of the V.S. mentioned therein enumerates various crimes that obtained in the society in the later Vedic age. The said hymn of the V.S. mentions cheats, pilferers, thieves, house-breakers, pickpockets, night-rangers, highwaymen, cutthroats, robbers armed with swords, marauders equipped with bows and arrows, swindlers and gangsters who move about with turbans on.[1] The terms Kulūñca, Stena, Stāyu, Muṣnat, Taskara used in this hymn signify different grades of theft. The terms Niṣaṅgina, Sṛkāyin, Jighaṃsad, Naktaṃcarat, Vikṛnta, Giricara, Uṣṇiṣin and the like bespeak different grades of gangsterism. S.B. 13-2-4-2 mentions thieves, robbers and ogres. Besides the various kinds of thieves and robbers the same hymn of the V.S. mentions also other vices and criminals such as unchaste woman (Āyogu), harlot (Puṃścalī), gambler (Kitava), adulterer (Jāra), paramour (Upapati), a female who practises love-spells (smara-kārī) etc. A highly licentious woman or a nymphomaniac who transgressed matrimonial bonds was called Atitvarī. The males of three higher castes often kept the females of the Śūdra caste as mistresses or concubines. It was a common vice countenanced in the society. The A.B. narrates the unpardonable crime committed by god Prajāpati, viz, incest with his daughter. The gods severely condemned the heinous crime of Prajāpati and

Various crimes mentioned in the V.S. and S.B.

Prajāpati punished for heinous crime.

1.—Vide V. S. 16-21, 22.

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created the dreaded god Rudra to punish him. Rudra killed Prajāpati.

As regards the ordeals the Brs. mention the ordeal of walking in burning fire. If the alleged culprit remains unscathed, if his body is not singed by fire he is declared not-guilty ; he is declared guilty if his body gets scalded. The eighth Prapāṭhaka of the C.U. mentions the ordeal of holding the red-hot axe ('Tapta-paraśu-grahaṇam'). If the alleged thief stood the ordeal all right he was acquitted. Standing the test of fire was a common ordeal prevalent in the Vedic and post-Vedic age. In the epic age Sitā's Fire-ordeal as the acid test of chastity is reminiscent of this Vedic ordeal. Some ordeals await men in the purgatory of the hell after death for sins committed during their life on earth. Some such ordeals and harrowings of the hell have been described in connection with Bhṛgu's mystic trance, and visit to purgatory under 'Eschatology' in Book III of this work.

Ordeals.

Reminiscence of Vedic fire-ordeal in the post-vedic age.

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Summary Of Book IV

Book IV comprises miscellaneous topics such as flora, fauna, astronomy, calendar, language and literature etc., which have no logical connection with one another. Due to this want of homogeneity these topics have been classed under 'Miscellaneous'. A gist of this book has been given in the introduction (pages). Four topics in particular dealt with in this book merit importance viz, astronomy, calendar, observations of the Brs. on speech and types of literature mentioned in the Brs. So far as the discussion of astronomy is concerned the knowledge of solar science of the Vedic fathers is astonishing. The Brs. state in clear language that the sun does not rotate, the apparent movement of the sun is illusory, that it is the earth that rotates, that the sun neither rises nor sets. The sun is ever-vigilant. Those who are in the dark about this scientific observation of the Vedic literature credit the astronomer Bhāṣkarācārya with the discovery of this solar science. Bhāṣkarācārya flourished in the 4th century A.D. whereas many centuries before he was born or thought of, the authors of the Brs. discovered this truth by their personal observation. The A.B. one of the oldest Brs., makes this observation in categorical terms and the date of this Br. is fixed between 2000 B.C. and 1500 B.C. Thus the Vedic sages observed and recorded this natural phenomena long before the west discovered it. The observation of A.B. is corroborated by the K.B. and G.B. The discussion captioned 'Calendar' presents a correct picture of the then Aryan calendar comprising the seasons, months, fortnights, solar and lunar months, weeks, days of the year, intercalary month etc. The full moon of the month of Phālguna marked the commencement of the year. The sessional sacrifice Gavāmayana and some iṣṭis connected with different sacrifices clearly bespeak the then calendar.

The observations of the Brs. on speech is interesting and illuminating. The division of speech into inarticulate and

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articulate, human and non-human, correct and faltering, the psychological relation and interdependence between mind and speech, regional variations etc., form an interesting study in the field of linguistics and acoustics. More interesting and astonishing than this topic is the survey of various types of literature recorded in the Brs. The emergence of so many varieties of literary form ranging from simple poetry and laudatory verses of human beings (Gāthā) to the art of reasoning and debate, philosophical observations, allegory and beginnings of drama in general, and morality plays and the like in hoary antiquity when the west was steeped in darkness surpass our imagination. These literary forms bear testimony to the creative activity of the age of the Brs. The language and literature of the early Saṃhitās attained remarkable development in the Brs. and found full expression in the wonderful language and literature of the Upaniṣads which bespeak perfect rhythm, perspicuity, lucidity, spontaneity, sublimity and sonority. Thus the literature of the Brs. is a transition from that of the Saṃhitā to the literature of the Upaniṣads.

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CONCLUSION

Now we shall attempt to present an over-all picture of the work as a whole. The work embodies all the important aspects denoted by the terms culture and civilisation as revealed in the Br. literature in general and the four Brāhmaṇas concerned in particular ; the social, economic, political, religious, philosophical, linguistic, literary and other miscellaneous aspects of the Brāhmaṇic age have been enumerated in the thesis. The relation of the Brāhmaṇical period with the early Vedic age on the one hand and with that of the Upaniṣadic age on the other has been clearly shown stating the points of similarity and departure in each aspect.

The transition from the early Vedic to the Brāhmaṇic or later Vedic age is a march from unstability to stability, unsettled life to settled life. During the period of the early Saṃhitās the States were still tribal having no territorial basis or fixed geographical boundary. Each clan used to move about with its chief from place to place ; such states may be termed floating states. In the later Vedic age these floating states became territorial with clearly defined geographical boundaries. It was also a march from chieftaincy to monarchy. Though there were various grades in the hierarchy of kingship, imperialism in the strict sense of the term is unknown. An emperor ruling over a vast dominion without any subsidiary king under him is unheard of.

Both in the social and political sphere the Brāhmins enjoyed a supreme position. They acted as chief advisers to the king in matters both diplomatic and spiritual. The clan-life of the early Vedic age assumed the form of class-life or caste system in the Brāhmaṇic age. Though the clan-life culminated into the family life and class-life the formation of the race did not materialise even in the age of the Brs. Through intermarriage between four castes many mixed castes emerged and the social structure became more complicated. New professions and industries came into

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existence to provide for the economic solvency of these new castes. Non-Aryans who submitted to the Aryan hegemony went to the making of the Śūdra community. During the age of the later Brs. the position of the Vaiśyas and Śūdras was upgraded. The non-Aryans who embraced the Aryan culture were no longer looked upon as enemies by the Aryan rulers. A political and cultural synthesis was attempted.

During the last phase of the Brāhmaṇic era the importance of sacrifice came to be underrated ; consequently the priests began to lose their hold on the common people and rich patrons. Politically also the influence of the Brāhmin priests was on the decline ; hence they began to lose their hold on the monarchs as well who were their main prop. This fact reached its culmination in the Upaniṣadic age when the Brāhminical power was definitely on the wane and sacrifice with its huge paraphernalia was denounced. Sacrifice could satisfy neither the enlightened people nor the mass. New popular religious cults such as the Viṣṇu-cult, Śiva-cult etc., came into existence which satisfied the common people whereas the cultured mind resorted to the path of knowledge. The later Brs. state the superiority of knowledge to the observance of Vedic rituals or karma. This tendency finds full expression in the Upaniṣads which sing the glory of knowledge, par excellence, and recommend it for the realisation of the Supreme Self. Thus the eulogy of knowledge in the later Brs., the emergence of popular religious cults and the beginnings of Bhakti-cult heralded a new era ; from this perspective the Brs. can be called precursors of both the Upaniṣads and the Purāṇas—of the Upaniṣads so far as the doctrine of knowledge, recognition of spiritual merit and the underrating of sacrifices are concerned ; and of the Purāṇas so far as the popular religious creeds and practices, Bhakti-cult and the germ of image-worship and places of pilgrimage are concerned. The rigidity of caste-system and class-bar gradually relaxed in this age and intellectual attainment or spiritual merit was given due recognition. Non-Brahmins, even Śūdras appear as authors of Br. text (the A.B.) and Vedic hymns. As a gesture of good-will and mark of compromise many non-Aryan practices and primitive religion were taken over by the Aryan society ; some sacrificial rites and popular religious cults amply bespeak this

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impact as stated in Book III under 'Influence of non-Aryan religion and primitive faith'.

In the domain of philosophy the doctrine of Karma, the problem of soul, transmigration and metempsychosis, the cosmogony and theology of the Brs. are a far cry from those of the early Saṃhitās. In the later Brs. such as the S.B. and T.B. not only the personal deities but the Impersonal Unqualified Supreme Godhead termed Brahman also is stated in clear and unambiguous terms, and the Vedantic doctrine of Mokṣa or final liberation has been hinted at. The identification of the Supreme Soul Brahman, individual Soul Ātman and Truth with one another is complete in the Brs. The beginnings of the Vedānta, Sānkhya, Nyāya and Pūrva-mīmāṃsā systems of Indian philosophy are clearly traceable in the Brs.

The language of the Brs. marks the first appearance of Sanskrit prose in a popular form which is gradually developed in the later Brs., the S.B. in particular, and culminates in the wonderful poetic prose of the Upaniṣads. So far as literary forms are concerned we meet with various types of literature referred to in the Brs. such as the Mantra texts, the Gāthā Nārāśaṃsī or laudatory verses in honour of human beings, Itihāsa-Purāṇa, Anuśāsana, Anvākhyāna, Vākovākyam, drama, allegory, maxims, art of debate, morality plays and accessories to the Vedic study. Our mind overflows with admiration for the creative genius of the Vedic fathers manifested in so many astonishing varieties of literary form that obtained in hoary antiquity. Thus in the field of language and literature as well the Brs. mark the period of transition from the Saṃhitā to the Upaniṣads.

From the above discussion it is clear that the age of Brs. mark the period of transition from the early Vedic age to the last phase of the Vedic age or the Upaniṣadic age from all aspects —social, economic, political, religious, philosophical, linguistic and literary. From the social aspect it was a march from clan-life to family life and class-life, from nomadic state to settled village life and urban life ; it is also a transition from simple social structure to complicated structure. Politically this era was a transition from clan-chieftaincy to monarchy, from floating

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tribal states to states with territorial basis, from simple kingship to hierarchy of monarchy. The Brāhmaṇa-Kṣatriya-rule was firmly established in the early Brāhmaṇic era but in the later Brāhmaṇic era the Brāhmaṇa or priestly power was on the decline and Kṣatriyas became supreme ; the priestly class yielded to the military class. Though the society was religio-centric in the early Brāhmaṇic era, in the later phase of this age religion began to lose its hold on politics as an inevitable result of the dwindling of priestly power. In the Upaniṣadic age the Kṣatriyas came to pre-eminence in the field of politics and scholarship as well. From the standpoint of religion the Br. period is a march from the mechanical sacerdotalism to the underrating of sacrifice and realisation of the spirit underlying the form of sacrifice, from the path of action to the path of knowledge, and from external rituals to inner purity and illumination, a march from outward to inward. From the perspective of philosophy it was an era of transition from Karmavāda to the way of knowledge, par excellence, from personal gods to the Impersonal Unqualified Supreme Godhead, from the attainment of heaven to the attainment of All-soul termed Mokṣa or final liberation. Thus it foreshadows the philosophy of the Upaniṣads. From the literary point of view the age of the Brs. is a march from the simple literature of the early Saṃhitās to the developed literary style, to the emergence of popular prose and astonishing varieties of literary form.

Hence from all aspects and all angles of vision the ancient Indian civilisation revealed in the Brs. may be called a half-way house between the early Vedic civilisation and the civilisation of the Upaniṣadic age.

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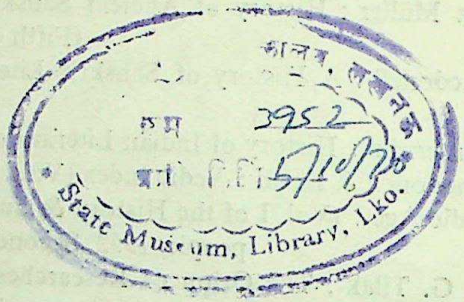

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